

THE ARGOSY.

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THE ENGAGEMENT OF SUSAN CHASE.

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CHAPTER VIII.

HOME AT LAST.

THE quay at Liverpool was alive with bustle and noise, for a large West Indian ship had just arrived after its prosperous voyage. It was a winter's day: the cold made itself felt, and the passengers, when they left the ship, were not sorry to hasten to the shelter of warm hotels.

One of them, a young and good-looking lady, only entered an hotel to leave it again. As soon as a post-chaise could be got ready, she took her seat in it, to go farther on. She looked ill and careworn, as if her health or her mind had suffered: perhaps both.

"It is an expensive way of travelling," she said to herself, "but it was better to come on. Another night of this suspense, now I am so near to them, would have seemed longer than all the rest. I wonder whether I shall hear of her! I wonder whether she has made her way to our home!"

It was about seven o'clock in the evening when she reached that home. A servant, whom she did not recognise, answered the summons at the door.

"Is Miss Chase within?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Oh, I am very glad! See to the luggage, will you? I will go on in."

"The luggage! Is it to come here, ma'am?"

"Yes," smiled the traveller. "You are strange in the house, or you would not ask it. I am Miss Susan Chase."

The girl's eyes brightened with intelligence. "Oh, ma'am! I think Miss Ursula has been expecting you. I am pleased you have got home safely, from such a long way."

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Ursula Chase was sitting near the fire, reading by the light of a shaded lamp, which, though it threw its brightness on the page, cast its shadow on the room. She turned round when the door opened, and saw, indistinctly, a figure muffled up.

"Ursula, don't you know me?"

"Susan! Susan!"

Ursula, always cold and calm, was aroused out of her nature. She loved her sister Susan better than any one in the world: or, it may be more correct to say, she loved no one but Susan. She clasped her, she hurried off her wrappings, she gently pushed her into an easy-chair; and, finally, sat down in her own, and burst into tears. The equable, undemonstrative Ursula Chase!

"Forgive my being absurd, Susan; but I am so rejoiced to have you back, safe and sound."

She had set Susan on, and she was crying also, far more bitterly than Ursula. The many disagreeable points of her ill-omened visit were pressing painfully on her remembrance, and she sobbed aloud.

"I wish I had been guided by you, Ursula, and had never gone! I shall repent it as long as I live."

"Well, well, it is over and done with. I will make you some tea. You look as if you had been ill, Susan."

"I have been very ill."

"On the voyage home?"

"No. At Barbadoes."

Ursula ordered the tea in, and busied herself in making it. "I am so delighted to see you," she said, "that all my scolding has gone out of my head; but I assure you, Susan, I had prepared a sharp one for you."

"For my having gone out?"

"No. Those old bygones must be bygones. For not having come home with Mrs. Carnagie. How could you think of remaining behind?"

Susan's heart leaped into her mouth. "Did Emma—did Mrs. Carnagie come here on her return?"

"Yes. She is here now."

"Now! In the house?"

"Not in the house. She is spending the day at the Ashleys'."

"Did she say why I did not come with her?" inquired Susan.

"I could not get from her why you did not come—or, indeed, why she came herself. There is no cordiality between us. Had I been here alone, I should have been tempted to refuse to receive her. But Henry happened to be at home then, and was pleased to welcome her, and it is his house, not mine. When he went away again, he charged me to make her comfortable as long as she liked to stay here. I questioned her as little as possible, but the excuses she gave sounded frivolous to me—that you were not ready, and stopped to nurse Mr. Carnagie, who was going to have a fever. It struck me that she

ought to have assumed the authority vested in a married woman, and insisted on your returning with her. Susan, I have said that I am not going to scold you now; but Mr. Carnagie's house was not quite the place for you, unsanctioned by the presence of his wife."

"No, it was not," spoke Susan, in resentful tones, for Emma's heartless conduct aroused every spark of indignation within her. "She should have told you the truth—that she gave me no chance of coming with her. Ursula! she ran away from Barbadoes."

Ursula had the teapot in her hand, preparing to pour out the tea. She put it down, and turned her eyes on Susan. "Ran away!"

"Clandestinely. We knew no more of her leaving than you did. She dressed for an evening party, went to it—as I supposed—and never came home again. The next day we found that she had sailed for England."

"And her reason?" imperiously demanded Ursula, who had never any charity to spare for ill-doing.

"I have not seen her since, you know. She and Mr. Carnagie were not very happy together."

"That is more than likely," responded Ursula, in a marked tone. "But Mr. Carnagie ought to have told you, if she did not. Of course," she added, an unpleasant idea obtruding itself, "she did not come without his sanction?"

"Yes; and without his knowledge also, Ursula. And what made it worse, he was sickening for a fever; and, for all she knew, he might have died in it."

"That's the fever she has hinted at. Which you, she says, remained to nurse."

"I did help to nurse him through it. And took it myself, and nearly lost my life."

Ideas crowded fast upon the mind of Ursula Chase. Her brow contracted. "Were you laid up there—in his house—alone?"

"Not alone. A friend, a widow lady, came to be with me the day after Emma left. And when I was well enough, I removed to her house until I sailed."

"It is the most incomprehensible story altogether!" uttered Ursula. "I mean Emma's proceedings. What did she leave Barbadoes for? What does she do in England? All I have heard her say about it is, that her health was bad, and she wanted a change. It appeared to be good enough when she came here."

"There was nothing the matter with her health. Ursula—the worst part of the history remains behind: she did not come away alone."

"I know that. Ruth came with her. The girl has leave for a week now, and is gone to see her friends."

"I do not mean Ruth. She had made herself——" Susan hesitated: between her strong hope that Emma might be innocent, and the obligation that was upon her to disclose the plain truth, she

was somewhat at a loss how to frame her words—"Emma had made herself conspicuous with a friend of Mr. Carnegie's; had been too much in his company; too free in her manners with him. He"—Susan dropped her voice to a whisper—"left Barbadoes with her."

Ursula turned white. And her tone, as she hastily rejoined, rose to a shriek.

"His name was not Chard? Susan, it was not Chard?"

"Captain Chard," was Susan's sad rejoinder.

Ursula's face presented a picture of dismay. After a pause, she spoke.

"He came here with her."

"Came here!" echoed Susan. "Did he stay here?"

"No. A couple of hours only. She introduced him to Henry as a friend of Mr. Carnegie's, who had taken charge of her over. Susan! she has a letter from that man every morning—every morning of her life. One day Henry asked her who her regular correspondent was, and she acknowledged it was Captain Chard: she said he was transacting business relative to Barbadoes, and it was necessary she should be kept informed of its progress. What are we to do with her? If she is—what she may be—she shall not contaminate this house. Nor would Henry wish her to be with us."

"It may not be so," cried Susan, eagerly. "At any rate, Ursula, it is not for us so to judge her, or to proclaim it. We must wait for the explanation."

"When is it to come? What is she going to do here? How long is she going to remain?" reiterated Ursula, with a frowning brow.

Susan shook her head. "I know nothing. Mr. Carnegie is coming over."

"What for?"

"To get a divorce," she answered, in a low tone. "As he says. But if he finds no grounds——"

Ursula rose; she paced the room in excitement. "A divorced woman! what a disgrace to the family! our sister! I wish the ship had sunk with them!"

"Ursula! Do not—who's this coming in?" cried Susan, breaking off her remonstrance.

"Frances Maitland, I believe! It is like the bustle she makes. She is always coming in when she is not wanted."

Frances Maitland it was. Susan's close friend for many years. She was inexpressibly surprised to see Susan.

"To think that I should find you here! I came in to sit an hour with Ursula, knowing Emma was out to-night, and here are you!"

"Safe at home again, after all my travels and wanderings," answered Susan.

The three gathered round the fire, Susan in the easy-chair, Frances on a footstool close to her, and talked of old times and present ones. Ursula said little.

"Susan," cried Frances, at length, "is there not something wrong between Emma and her husband? It is not all blue sky, is it?"

"I have certainly seen more loving couples," was Susan's rejoinder.

"Did you ever see a more hating one? I prophesied they would have no luck. What do you think Emma said to me the other day?"

"Some nonsense, perhaps."

"I took it for sense by her tone and look. That of all the live animals walking on two legs, there was not one she detested half so much as she detested Lieutenant Carnagie."

"Emma was always given to making random assertions," returned Susan. "You know that. Something like yourself, Frances."

"Susan, are they separated?" resumed Frances, lowering her voice.

"Separated! What do you mean?"

"I do not believe she is going back to him," was Frances Maitland's answer. "I was telling her she had better invite me to go home with her to Barbadoes, and she said it was no home of hers, and never should be again. What does it all mean?"

"I am not in Emma's confidence," replied Susan. "She may have said it in a moment of pique."

"And she seems to have as little intention of staying long here. I must say one thing, however, Susan—that you were determined to have enough of your old lover's company, to remain with him, instead of coming home with Emma! If some of us giddy ones were to do such a thing, we should be called all to pieces for it."

Poor Susan felt her face flush, and she leaned her head upon her hand. Ursula aroused herself, and spoke up in the stern tone she took when displeased.

"You seem to forget my sister's fatigue, or you would not tease her to-night with absurd jokes. In all that Susan has done she has had but one motive—love to Mrs. Carnagie."

"I know that," cried Frances. "I wish we were all as pure-hearted and full of love as Susan. We cannot say as much for Emma."

Miss Maitland remained late, but Emma did not come in. When she rose to go, Ursula said she had a request to make to her.

"What is it?"

"Should you meet Mrs. Carnagie on your way, do not say that Susan has returned. We want to surprise her."

"Very well. I won't."

"*She* need not talk about having enough of a lover's company," exclaimed Ursula, as Frances left. "A pretty affair she has had herself, Susan, since you have been away."

"Indeed! A fresh one?"

"Threw herself, point blank, at the head—or the heart—of a new curate we had. She nearly tormented his life out of him; meeting him in his walks, and at the cottages, and inviting him to their house. It was too barefaced. He did not respond: and people do say that he threw up the curacy to be rid of her."

"Frances was wild to be married, years ago, and I conclude, as the time gets on, and she gets on, that her anxiety does not lessen."

"She's wild to be a simpleton," sharply retorted Ursula.

When Mrs. Carnegie was heard entering the hall, Susan rose from her seat in agitation. She could not meet her unmoved, and she laid hold of the table to steady herself.

Mrs. Carnegie came in. One amazed glance, one quick look of perplexity in her face, and then it resumed its indifference again. She had possibly anticipated the present moment, and prepared herself for it. She had recovered all her European good looks, and was prettier than ever.

"Susan! What wind blew you here? Are you alone?"—she looked round the room. "Is *he* come?"

"No. If you allude to your husband."

"He is not any husband of mine; and is not going to be again. Don't honour him so far as to give him the title."

"Are you aware, madam, what has come to my knowledge?" uttered Ursula, advancing, and planting herself before Mrs. Carnegie. "That you quitted your husband's home clandestinely, and left your sister unprotected in Mr. Carnegie's house?"

"Susan is not a child. She is old enough to protect herself," was the flippant answer.

"How *dared* you come home to *me* with your untruths—that Susan was not ready to accompany you? You did not give her the opportunity of doing so. You did not wish it."

"Perhaps I did not," returned Mrs. Carnegie.

"Emma," interposed Susan, "your conduct to me has been cruel, utterly unjustifiable and unpardonable. How could you think of quitting Barbadoes without me? of leaving me alone with Mr. Carnegie?"

"What if I did? You have not eaten each other up."

Ursula's hands tingled to inflict personal chastisement upon her, as they had sometimes done when Emma was a child. Susan spoke:—

"And your conduct was even more cruel to your husband. He was attacked with the fever, and you knew it. He had it dangerously; so dangerously that it was a mercy he did not die."

"I wish he had!" fervently uttered Mrs. Carnegie. "If praying for it would have taken him, he'd have gone, for I was doing that all the voyage over. Young Grape was on board just before we sailed, and reported that Carnegie had been sent home delirious."

Susan sat down in dismay. Even Ursula was silenced. What were they to do with her?

"Are you aware that he is following you to England?—and for what purpose?" sternly demanded Ursula.

"To get a divorce, I hope," was the cool reply. It struck Ursula dumb.

"If he has any spirit, he will sue for a divorce, that's all," added Mrs. Carnegie.

"Oh, you wicked woman!" uttered the indignant Ursula. "To come here, in brazen impudence, and bring *him* with you! That man! Did you forget, madam, that this was a respectable house—that it was once your mother's, and that it is now mine?"

"Forget it, no," said Emma; "and I am quite as respectable as you are. And so is he."

"Susan, is she mad?"

Emma advanced forward, her whole face lighted up with passion. "I have done no wrong," she said. "I left my home in the way I did to get rid of my husband, rid of his name, and to become free again. I concerted my plans with Captain Chard. When Mr. Carnegie sues for a divorce, which of course he must do, he will obtain it, for it will be unopposed, and then I shall become Captain Chard's wife. He has loved me long, and I love him. I have done no wrong," she repeated, with flashing eyes, "and Captain Chard would not lead me into it; but rather"—she dropped her voice—"than not be rid of Lieutenant Carnegie, we would run away to-morrow."

"Oh, Emma!" exclaimed Susan. "If we believe you, can you expect the world will do so?"

"It will have to. Once let the divorce be pronounced, and we shall make our assertions good. Ruth can bear good testimony, and so can others. Mr. Carnegie has had a letter before this, despatched on my arrival here, that will sting him into seeking a divorce: it was purposely worded for it."

"Are you not afraid of other consequences than a divorce?" asked Susan. "Mr. Carnegie is bitterly indignant against Captain Chard. He says he will shoot him."

"Two can play at that game," retorted Mrs. Carnegie.

"I hope," uttered Ursula, in fervent tones, "that your Captain Chard will be drummed out of the regiment. A reputable commander!"

"Too late," sarcastically rejoined Mrs. Carnegie. "He has sold out."

"The kindest thing that could have happened to you would have been a shipwreck to the bottom of the sea," repeated Ursula.

"Thank you. The waves were not of your opinion, you perceive. I hope and trust *he* may get shipwrecked coming over. It would save a world of trouble, and I and Captain Chard would hold a public rejoicing over it. Have you any more fault to find with me? Because, if not, I am going up to bed."

No reply was made, and Mrs. Carnegie quitted the room.

"Susan," muttered Ursula again, "*is* she mad? What will become of us all, in the eyes of the world?"

"Can what she says be true?" asked Susan. "I am inclined to believe it."

"What difference does it make, whether true or false?" retorted Ursula. "We know the construction that must be put on such conduct. I shall write to Henry; a letter that will bring him home. If he persists in allowing her to remain in the house, I shall leave it."

CHAPTER IX.

FRANCES MAITLAND'S ANGER.

TWELVE months more passed away, and Emma Carnagie's strange plans were bearing fruit. Mr. Carnagie had lost no time; the very ship which had brought Susan home, had also brought certain instructions from Mr. Carnagie to his solicitors, and he had followed them later. An action was forthwith commenced against Captain Chard, "*Carnagie v. Chard*." It was undefended at the trial, and judgment and damages were suffered to go by default. In early spring, seventeen months after her departure from her husband's home, Mrs. Carnagie was pronounced to have forfeited all claim to his name for ever. During the proceedings, Mrs. Carnagie had resided with one of her brothers, for Ursula had been bitter, unforgiving, and vehement.

Before the divorce was finally pronounced, Susan and Ursula were invited to spend some time with an aged relative in Wales. They accepted it readily, glad to be away from their own neighbourhood for a while: Ursula was wont to declare, every time she went out, that the people "looked at her," as if to remind her that she was the sister of Mrs. Carnagie. They were away three months, and the chief change which they found on their return was, that their rector had obtained a six months' leave of absence, and a stranger was residing in the rectory and officiating for him.

On the following day, Sunday, they went to church as usual. The new clergyman had just ascended the reading-desk. Susan looked at him: she rubbed her eyes and looked again; it was surely Mr. Leicester, whom she had left in Barbadoes! And now their gaze met, and there was no longer room for doubt.

"I like him very much!" cried Ursula, alluding to the new clergyman, as they were walking home from church after service. "I wonder who he is?"

"I can tell you," said Susan. "It is Mr. Leicester. I know him, Ursula."

"You! Where have you known him?"

"In Barbadoes. He had a church there. It was to his house I was removed from Mr. Carnagie's. You have forgotten the name, perhaps. It was his sister, Mrs. Freeman, who nursed me through the fever. They were very kind to me, and I am under great obligations to them."

"Is he married, this Mr. Leicester?"

"No. At least he was not then."

"There was a lady in the parsonage pew."

A quick step behind them, a step Susan thought she remembered, and she turned round to find her hand taken by Mr. Leicester, a tall, fine man, with an intellectual countenance. What with old recollections, and perhaps conscious present feelings, Susan felt her face become one crimson glow, as he held her hand and looked into her eyes.

"My sister Ursula," she said, turning them away. "I do not know when I have been so much surprised as to-day, Mr. Leicester."

"To see me officiating in your own parish," he laughed. "When you left me far away, not so very long ago."

"Have you come over on leave of absence?"

"I have come over for good. My health has been very indifferent for twelve months past, so I resigned my appointment there. I am in expectation of preferment in England, but meanwhile this offered and I took it."

When they arrived at their house, he entered with them. Ursula went upstairs to take off her things, Susan remaining in the drawing-room with Mr. Leicester.

"May I inquire after your sister?" he said in low tones.

"She is just married again. They were married the instant it was possible after the divorce was obtained. You must have heard that amongst our friends here, for I have no doubt they have been full of it."

"Yes, it has been a prolific topic," replied Mr. Leicester. "The marriage was also in the newspapers."

"In every newspaper in the United Kingdom, I think," returned Susan, her tone betraying her vexation. "All possible publicity that could be given to it, Captain and Mrs. Chard gave. They sent out cards and cake to every family they knew."

"They are travelling, are they not?"

"They have gone to Germany, I believe. But we have held no communication with themselves. My sister Ursula resents Emma's conduct deeply."

"But if Mrs. Carnegie is to be believed, there was little to resent. So the neighbourhood here says."

"I think she is to be believed; indeed, there appears to be no doubt about it. But we feel that, even at its best, she has brought great disgrace into the family, and Ursula will never forget or forgive it."

"Mr. Carnegie is also about to marry again."

"Is he?" exclaimed Susan.

"You remember those wealthy planters on that large estate a few miles off Barbadoes?"

"Yes. The Prance estate, you mean."

"He is going to marry Miss Prance."

"Why, she was a half-caste!" uttered Susan, after a pause of amazement.

Mr. Leicester nodded. "It has caused a good deal of surprise in Barbadoes. She will have a very large fortune."

"It was said she was very cruel," observed Susan, "and would beat her slaves with her own hand."

"And I know that to be true," said Mr. Leicester. "However, Mr. Carnegie is to marry her. He was only waiting for the necessary time to elapse after the divorce."

"I heartily wish him more happiness than in his last marriage," said Susan; "and perhaps he may find it, although she is half-caste. When she is an Englishman's wife she may be taught that slaves are possessed of human feelings, as she is, and learn to treat them kindly."

"Did you see Mr. Carnegie when he was in England?"

"Yes. He came here; but it was only a passing visit," answered Susan. "I was glad when he went back again; I was always fearing that he and Captain Chard might meet. Mr. Carnegie came over intending to challenge him; but his lawyers told him that, if he took the law into his own hands, he would not get his divorce. I suppose they only said it to prevent bloodshed. How is Mrs. Freeman? Did she come home with you?"

"No; she remains in Barbadoes. She is Mrs. Grape now. I have an elder sister staying here with me—Miss Leicester."

"Do you like the neighbourhood?"

"Not so well as I had anticipated. I shall like it better now I have an old friend in it," he added, with a smile. And Susan's colour deepened again, for which she could have boxed her own ears.

The time went on. The neighbourhood, to whom Frances Maitland's flirting propensities were nothing new, grew into the habit of joking her about Mr. Leicester. She was little loth. Anxious as she was to be married—and as it was well known that she was—often as she had striven to accomplish the desired end by setting her cap (the popular phrase) at single men, she had never set it so strenuously, or met with one who had so won upon her regard, as Mr. Leicester; and she grew to show it too plainly. Frances haunted him. Go where he would, he met her—in the park, in the village, amongst the poor, and in the vestry of his church. For Frances had constituted herself into a parish visitor, and had for ever some question to ask Mr. Leicester. She was very handsome, with beautiful features and brilliant dark eyes, and, like too many other handsome girls, thought herself irresistible.

And yet, with all this, she did not get on. No, do what she would, she did not advance a step nearer her hope than she had been

at the commencement. Mr. Leicester was always civil, always polite, often conversed with her, but still his manner would not betray a deeper interest. "I wonder," thought Frances to herself, "whether he has any attachment elsewhere! Perhaps he has left some one behind him in Barbadoes."

"You are wasting your time," Miss Ashley abruptly observed to her one hot summer's day, as she came upon Frances sitting in the park.

"What in?" inquired Frances.

"Running after Mr. Leicester."

"Well, I'm sure!" uttered Frances. "What next? I don't run after him."

"The sun does not shine, does it, Frances? It's not opposite to you at this moment?" ironically returned Miss Ashley. "Why, what are you sitting on this bench for now but to catch him as he goes by from the cottages? My dear, our perceptive faculties, in these parts, are not buried in a wood."

"I don't care whether they are buried or not," angrily retorted Frances. "I suppose I may sit in the open air on a day when it's too hot to remain indoors without having covert motives imputed to me."

"Don't put yourself out. I only say you are wasting your time; and you ought to be obliged to me for telling you, as you can't see it for yourself. I think you are buried in a wood, Frances, or you would see where Mr. Leicester's hopes are fixed. Love's eyes are blind, they say."

"What do you mean? Fixed where?"

"He is nothing to me, so I have my sight about me, and have suspected the truth some time. I should not wonder but it was her being here brought him into the place."

"Who? Who?" impatiently demanded Frances, stamping her foot.

"Susan Chase."

"Susan Chase?" repeated Miss Maitland. "What has she to do with Mr. Leicester?"

"Nothing—as yet. But I think it will come to it. They like each other."

Frances Maitland turned away her head. "How do you know this?"

"I was speaking to Susan one day about her having known Mr. Leicester in Barbadoes, and she grew confused and red, as she had never grown before but at the name of Mr. Carnegie. It set me wondering. I have watched them since, and I feel sure he likes her. There is a peculiar tone in his voice when he speaks to her, a gentleness in his manner, which he gives to no one else. And he is with her often. He makes his health a plea for avoiding general visiting, but he can go there and pass most of his evenings. You have been wasting your time, Frances."

"She can't expect to marry after her affair with Mr. Carnagie," spoke Frances, in a fury—"especially Mr. Leicester. The idea of her taking in a clergyman!"

"That's past and gone. The Carnagie affair need be no impediment to her marrying another. I don't see that it need."

"Don't you?" was the sulky answer. "Then I do."

Bessy Ashley laughed.

"When Susan was engaged to him for years, was wild after him! After their wedding-day being fixed twice over, once before he went to Barbadoes, and three years afterwards, when he returned from it, and she loving him all that time, and pining after him! You call that no impediment," persisted Frances Maitland. "Then I do."

"Not a bit of it. Neither would you, if you were not prejudiced," returned Miss Ashley.

The conversation had turned Frances Maitland's blood to gall. Susan Chase to win the prize for which she had been striving! Not if she could prevent it. She sat on, after Miss Ashley left her, nourishing her jealousy, nourishing her resentment, working herself into a positive fury.

Presently Mr. Leicester was discerned crossing the corner of the park. Frances rose and met him, and then turned to pursue her walk by his side.

"It is a hot day," he observed.

"So hot that I hoped to find a little coolness strolling about under these shady trees," replied Frances, whose heart was beating wildly, and whose colour went and came. She was just in the mood to let her tongue commit itself, if she were not careful.

"I have come from the cottages," said Mr. Leicester. "The poor people have been pleased to tell me they shall be sorry to lose me."

"I dare say they will be. Our rector does not trouble himself about cottage people. But you are not going yet, Mr. Leicester?"

"I came for six months, and have been here five."

"But—was there not some hope given to us that you might remain longer?" cried Frances, looking at him, and speaking quickly. "We heard so."

"The rector wrote to propose it, and the bishop would have been agreeable. That must be what you heard."

"Yes. Will you not remain?"

He looked at her in turn, and smiled. "I cannot if I would; though I did not know that until this morning. The post brought me the welcome news that I have been appointed to a living, and I must take possession of it as soon as I can be released from this."

Frances Maitland's heart sank within her. If he left without speaking, there would be good-bye to her hopes for ever.

"What shall we all do without you?" she said, banteringly.

"Nay; what shall I do without you? I think that will be the real question." But he only spoke generally, and Frances knew it

"What will Susan Chase do without you?" whispered Frances, unable longer to repress her bitter jealousy. "Report says that she will especially miss Mr. Leicester."

"Report is very kind to say anything so flattering," was his reply; and Frances saw the hot flush mount to his brow.

"And that Mr. Leicester will miss Miss Chase. Is it so?" she cried, with all the vehemence of her ill-regulated nature. But she was beside herself that day.

"Miss Maitland must pardon me. I do not see that I need satisfy gossip on the score of my private affairs."

"You cannot have serious thoughts of Susan Chase," she continued, in agitation; "or, if you have, you do not know her previous history."

"What is her previous history?" demanded Mr. Leicester, surprised into putting the hasty question.

"Susan's love was wasted long ago; she has none left to bestow upon you. Wasted on Lieutenant Carnegie."

"On Lieutenant Carnegie!" uttered the astonished Mr. Leicester. "Her sister's husband?"

"She loved him passionately for years. She was engaged to him, and their wedding-day was fixed. And at the last he left her, and chose her sister. A woman who has been betrothed in that way, and who has no love left, is not a suitable object for your affection, Mr. Leicester."

He was evidently absorbed in the story.

"She could not forget him even when he was Emma's husband. She followed them to Barbadoes. When Mrs. Carnegie returned to England she remained there with him, in his house. What do you suppose kept her from returning with her sister but her unconquerable love for him? Do you hear it, sir? She allowed Emma to sail without her, and remained behind with Mr. Carnegie. Tush!" was the scornful epithet, and very scornfully was it spoken, "Susan Chase is no fitting wife for the Reverend Mr. Leicester."

Frances Maitland had overshot her mark: many do, when urged on by ill-nature: and Mr. Leicester's countenance brightened, and a half smile arose to it.

"I do not wish to enter into Miss Chase's affairs with you, Miss Maitland, for I have not her permission to do so; but I must set you right upon one great point. The cause of her not accompanying her sister to England was not undue affection for Mr. Carnegie."

"Oh, indeed! You think so?"

"I know it, and can certify to it. Circumstances over which she had no control compelled Miss Chase to remain in Barbadoes; but she remained there under the protection of my sister, Mrs. Freeman, and our house was afterwards her temporary home until she sailed."

"Are you determined not to believe what I tell you of Mr. Carnegie?" panted Frances.

"I cannot dispute your word that Miss Chase may have been engaged to Mr. Carnegie, but it would be impossible for me to believe anything to her real prejudice. She is a single-hearted, pure-minded woman, and I speak from intimate observation of her conduct."

Furious anger, jealous resentment, rushed into the heart of Frances Maitland; scarlet mortification was shown on her face. "Perhaps you wish to avow that you love her?" she intemperately uttered.

"That is an avowal a man rarely makes to a third person," was Mr. Leicester's answer. "I can avow that my friendship for her is great, that I esteem her beyond any woman I ever met with, or probably ever shall meet."

"Then you are a blind idiot!" shrieked Frances; and she tore away from him, at a right angle, over the hot grass.

"And now for Susan," thought Mr. Leicester, after he had sufficiently digested his companion's frantic proceedings. "The sooner I speak the better."

He did not see Susan until evening. When he entered she was alone.

"Is your sister out?" he inquired.

"No," replied Susan. "She is not very well and has gone to her room for the night. She suffers very much from heat, and this hot day has completely overpowered her."

The fact was, poor Ursula Chase, tall and very stout, did suffer terribly in hot weather. So she was in the habit, on intensely hot days, of retiring early to her chamber and courting the evening breeze at the open window in the airy costume of a dressing-gown.

"Have you heard the news?" asked Mr. Leicester.

"No."

"I wonder at that, for news spreads fast in this vicinity and I mentioned it this morning."

"What is it?" asked Susan.

"That I have had a living presented to me."

"Indeed! Then you will be leaving this."

"At the month's end. I wonder whether any one will regret me?"

"Oh yes," involuntarily answered Susan. "Many will," she hastened to add.

"Susan," he said, in a lower tone, as he advanced close to her and took her hand, "must I go alone?"

She strove to take it from him, but he would not let her. "Has not the time come when I may speak again?" he whispered. "Susan, we are both leading lonely lives. Why should it be so? Had I come here and found you with any object, or probable object, of attachment, I should have abided by the old refusal, and never more have recurred to it. But it is not so, for you remain alone in the world. There have been times lately—may I speak out freely?" he

broke off to ask, "frankly, as if the undisguised heart spoke, and not the lips?"

"Yes, yes," she answered.

"Then I have at times fancied you were inclined to regret that refusal: that you were beginning to esteem me more than you did when you pronounced it."

"I could not esteem you more than I did then, Mr. Leicester," she said, in gentle tones.

"Well—esteem is too cold a word, but—I did not dare to make it warmer. The joy that hope has brought to me is great; too great to be crushed now. Oh, Susan, you must listen to me! think how long I have loved you! What caused me to leave Barbadoes? The thought of you, quite as much as my breaking health. What made me seek employment in this locality? The hope of being reunited to you."

Now, the truth was, if Susan did not repent her former rejection of Mr. Leicester immediately on its being given, she had done so very soon afterwards. That is, she repented having put a barrier to her friendship and intimacy with him. During the voyage home she had had leisure to reflect on his estimable qualities, his welcome society, his noble conduct to herself; and he gradually became the one bright spot in the sad Barbadoes reminiscence. During her more recent intercourse with him, she had learnt to love him: not, however, as she had once loved another. *That* could never be again for Susan Chase: it never is, for any one.

She stood closer to the window, pressed her forehead on its frame, and spoke in a subdued tone.

"There are circumstances in my past life, which, if known to you, would probably forbid you to think of me as you are doing. Before I relate them to you, I must premise that all you have said may be as retracted. I shall understand it as such. No, Mr. Leicester"—for he sought to take her hand again—"listen first.

"When I was eighteen, I became engaged to a young officer; our marriage was fixed, and I was to accompany him abroad. My mother's death prevented it, and he sailed without me. We corresponded for more than three years, and then he returned to fulfil his engagement. It was Lieutenant Carnagie."

Susan stopped, but Mr. Leicester made no comment.

"He returned to marry me; but, ere the wedding-day, I found that his love for me had changed into a love for my youngest sister,—a strong, uncontrollable passion, as it appeared, and she shared it. I sacrificed my own feelings, released him, and they were married."

"Go on, Susan."

"From that moment I strove to drive him from my heart: it was a hard and bitter task, but I succeeded tolerably well: and when Emma wrote that she was suffering in health, miserable, and had a presentiment of dying in her approaching illness, I thought it my duty

to go out to Barbadoes to her. Ursula would not do so. There I met you, Mr. Leicester."

"And your sister requited your kindness by quitting you in the manner she did!"

"Yes. You can understand, now, why I felt it so undesirable to be left under the roof of Mr. Carnegie. Not," added Susan, turning her truthful eyes upon him, "that any trace of former feeling remained in my heart. Oh no, that had been completely eradicated: but I felt my position an unpleasant one."

"It was so."

"And it proved so. One day after I had recovered from my illness—I wish to tell you all, Mr. Leicester—Lieutenant Carnegie so far forgot himself as to speak of our former love: he urged me to promise that it should be renewed after the divorce from my sister was obtained. I was shocked and terrified: and I told him that I would far rather marry any poor slave on his estate than I would marry him. He left me in a passion, and you came in, close upon it. It was then you—spoke to me."

"Ay, ay."

"But I answered you very differently from the way in which I answered him, though the substance was the same," she said, glancing brightly up. "I was thankful to you, Mr. Leicester, gratified by your good opinion of me; and, in one sense, regretted so to answer you, for I had begun to value your friendship. I removed to your house the same afternoon."

"And I went up the country, on an improvised mission, to rid you of my company. The time will come yet, Susan, when we shall beguile our home evenings by talking over these old days."

This remark recalled Susan. "When Mr. Carnegie was in England last year, he came here. What do you think for? To renew his prayer, that I would still become Mrs. Carnegie. I quitted his presence, and sent Ursula to answer him. She did it. That is all I have to tell you, Mr. Leicester."

"And why have you told it me, Susan?"

"It was right that you should know it. And because, knowing it, you may not think of me as you did before."

"No, I do not; I think of you more highly. I repeat, Susan, I cannot see why you have told me this. Why should your having been engaged to Mr. Carnegie render you less eligible to become my wife?"

"Because my heart's whole love was given to him," she murmured. "Because, loving him as I did, ardently, enduringly, I can never love another. I esteem you, Mr. Leicester—far more than I ever esteemed him; I like you better than I like any one; better, probably, than I ever shall like any one, even if we do not meet again after this night. I feel a pride in your upright character. I long for your society; in the daytime I wish the hours would more quickly pass on to

evening, which may bring you ; and, once in your presence, I am at rest, and look for nothing beyond it. Yet, for all this, I do not *love* you ; my love passed from me with Charles Carnagie."

Mr. Leicester drew her face from the window, drew it towards him between his hands, and gazed on it. "What more can I desire?" he asked. "My dearest, I will promise you one thing—never to be jealous of the memory of Lieutenant Carnagie."

"You are willing to take me as I am, with my worn-out heart?"

"Ay, Susan ! take you and be thankful."

"Then," she whispered, leaning forward to hide her tearful face on his breast, "hear me also promise that I will be to you a good and faithful wife. You shall never have cause to regret that my early love was given to another."

"Susan, I must pay myself for that old refusal."

"As you please."

"Frances," cried Bessy Ashley, dancing into the presence of Frances Maitland, some days later, "I am going to be bridesmaid to somebody. You are going to be asked to be another. Ursula Chase is to be the third."

"Who is going to be married?"

"Ah ! Who ! I am right, after all. It is to be directly, before the summer's over."

"Can't you speak out ? Who is it ?"

"Susan Chase and Mr. Leicester."

"It's not true," said Frances, turning fifty colours.

"If it's not true, may I never be a bride myself," uttered Bessy.

"Just pocket your nonsense, and behave to them as a decent young lady ought to behave. It *will be* : and you know what can't be cured must be endured."

Frances Maitland did pocket it, and was one of Susan Chase's bridesmaids on her wedding-day.

And Susan saw that destiny had been kinder to her than she would have been to herself ; for she knew that, as the wife of Lieutenant Carnagie, her heart would have sought in vain for the *home* it had now found in Mr. Leicester.

THE END.



CONVERSATION.

THE end of conversation is to promote good fellowship.

There are a great many secondary aims, as the communication of knowledge, the recommendation of new truth, the spreading of news, and the discussion of political or other questions of interest. But whatever may be the topic, conversation is not well conducted unless it secures good fellowship: it must not pass into monologue, nor into dry dissertation; it must not become ill-natured or crotchety, nor must it become cold and merely polite, nor restrained and unsocial.

He is indeed a *bore* of the first order who will not allow anyone else to be heard, who monopolises the opportunity and lords it over all the rest.

To listen well is a rarer and higher accomplishment than to express oneself. Goethe well says that it is nature to express oneself, but only culture enables one to accept, as they are meant, the expressions of others. This is wise and discerning, and pierces to the very first principles of conversation.

To remain silent is to give the impression of large reserve, if the quietude is combined with any grace or sweetness of manner.

Many readers will remember the anecdote told of Coleridge; how one day he was dining, and was impressed by the quietude of his next neighbour, who listened to his silvery stream of talk with apparent enjoyment. At last, some dish of a special kind was presented, when the man in the broadest rural accent said: "Aye, them's the Johnnies for me," which dissipated the illusion. Had the man not spoken at all, he would have been credited with a power for those flashes of silence which are said to be the birthright of certain forms of genius.

Lord Bacon has said some of the wisest and shrewdest things about conversation.

To all who have "entertaining" to do, on however small a scale, these words may be offered as a *vade mecum*. He or she will not fail in any essential, if the main points here so luminously laid down are absorbed. The chief business of a host or hostess is to give the occasion, to suggest, and to bring sympathetic minds into play, so that as iron, in the language of Scripture, sharpeneth iron, so may a man the countenance of his friend. The gift for this kind of management is not inborn in many; indeed it is inborn in very few; but much can be done by self-control and practice to develop it.

So long as there is anything stiff, stilted, and distant in talking, the best result has not been reached. All who have written on conversation are agreed in this. "To talk without effort," say the

Brothers Hare in the 'Guesses at Truth,' "is after all the great charm of talking."

Yet ease isn't everything. No one can doubt that Coleridge and Hazlitt in a past age were great talkers and talked with ease; or that Lord Macaulay, and Carlyle, and De Quincey were great talkers and talked with ease; but the two former were prone to lose all sense of proportion, of that moderating power of which Bacon speaks, and failed to show the highest culture in listening patiently.

Probably it is in this sense that Goethe says, "I am an enemy to long explanations: they deceive the maker or the hearer; generally both."

The social party is not the place for Academical lectures, and he is apt to be thought either a prig or a pretender who adventures upon them. Men like Macaulay and Carlyle were privileged; but they were masters of monologue rather than of polite conversation. Their example is not to be followed.

The talk of De Quincey, according to all accounts, was more amenable to Bacon's demand. He loved to listen and desired to excite expression on the part of the company. His inborn gentleness and courtesy, no less than his humility in his desire to learn from others, sufficed to keep him up to a fine level of sympathetic consideration which he always observed.

Perhaps it was with an eye to a warning against the tendency to monologue that one wrote: "Speech builds barriers as often as it breaks them down"; which has its counterpart in this expression of Goethe, "No one would talk much in society if he were aware how often he fails to understand others." Certainly men of the type of Macaulay and Carlyle failed very often to understand others, else they would not have been so persistent in giving the impression of their own exacting egotism and self-worship.

Montaigne, in his essay on Conversation, has some very good hints. This is one: "In table-talk I prefer the merry man before the wise one, and in common conversation the most able speaker, even though he does not always mean what he says; and so of other things."

This points at one great rule. Earnestness is apt to overleap itself, and one-sided enthusiasm is almost sure to do so. The man with a hobby, the man with a grievance, the man with a cause, these are one and all, save in very exceptional cases, bad subjects for the master of conversation to manage and control.

And just as they violate harmony and fair interchange by the interposition of their egotism, so does the person who would fain lay bare his bosom and treat the party to a revelation of all his private affairs, his sufferings, and even his faults. Goethe has well said on this point: "We should never speak openly of our faults, or those of others, if we do not think thereby to effect some useful purpose."

People who garnish their conversation with expletives or inter-

jections show their vulgarity and bad taste, as well as run the risk of disgusting the very persons they are most fain to attract and amuse. But the acute observer will not fail to make his own reflections and his own use, it may be, of them in the spirit of the sentence: "Interjections, &c., are not infrequently shorthand notes of character."

Ben Jonson ("O rare Ben"), in his 'Rules for the Tavern Academy,' has these very sensible and piquant verses:—

"At the fund of our pleasure let each pay his shot,
Except some chance friend whom a member brings in;
Far hence be the sad, the lewd fop, and the sot,
For such have the plagues of good company been.

* * * * *

Let's have no disturbance about taking places
To show your nice breeding or out of vain pride;
Let the drawers be ready with wine and fresh glasses,
Let the waiters have eyes though their tongues must be ty'd.

Let the contest be rather of books than of wine,
Let the company be neither noisy nor mute,
Let none of things serious, much less divine,
When belly and head full, profanely dispute.

* * * * *

Let raillery be without malice or heat,
Dull poems to read let none privilege take;
Let no poetaster command or intreat
Another extempore verses to make.

Let argument bear no unmusical sound,
No jars interpose, sacred friendship to grieve;
For generous lovers let a corner be found,
Where they in soft sighs may their passions relieve."

A. H. JAPP, LL.D.



PAOLO'S MODEL.

I.

AN artist sat one evening in his studio. Without lay the fair city of Florence, the city whose very stones and mortar are consecrated to art. The names of her great painters were written in letters of fire on his heart, and his one consuming desire was to make his own of equal glory. But the work that was to compass this was not yet started. Unfinished pieces were scattered about; his attention was engaged on none of them. The canvas stretched before him was bare, and his gaze was fastened on it as if he were trying to evolve some definite vision from vacancy.

"The Christ of my dreams!" he murmured. "How clearly His face shines from my soul's recess! His eyes full of blessing—lips just parting to utter the word which would make all own Him God. But soon as ever I put brush to canvas, it flies. The artists of old used to pray before their work. Have not I spent hours on my knees, asking for the boon of my ideal in visible form? Is there none on earth that might serve me for model? I never stir abroad, but I see the faces of all who pass me. A flitting gleam in one or another, now a man's, now a woman's, seems to promise what I want. But as I gaze it is lost, and my fellows count me for crazy. The poor mad painter—that is what they call me. Mad or not, I will present the Christ once more in such a form that the world will go after Him as it has never done before. It is I who will be His apostle. The chief of His apostles. My glory will be linked with His through all eternity."

He would have recognised the embodiment of his visionary Christ amongst a thousand. Must his ideal die within him and never see the light? Amongst those who had offered themselves for models were more than one that might have served for a heathen god, but never one for Christ. Luigi of the crooked mouth was of benignant aspect in profile, but his full face spoke of craft and cruelty. Hugo the fair-haired Dane looked strong enough to cope single-handed with the powers of death and hell, but his expression of pride would have ill fallen in with one's conception of the gentle Saviour. Such an one might break open the prison-gates, but would lack the kindness to set the captives free. There was a lack of spirituality in Antonio's face, while Martello's was spiritual enough but weak. The little ones might nestle in his arms, but women would never look to him for help. The "Bimbo bianco," the name by which a certain well-known model went, had a face of almost cherubic innocence, but childish. It must be a countenance that would make men valiant to look upon, as well as pure and gentle,—one that should not only attract the

good, but arrest the wicked in their course, and win them to thoughts of heaven.

To portray Him in His infancy were in comparison an easy task. In all childhood there is a trace of the Divine. Its past is hid in heaven ; its present sinless ; its future full of mysterious possibilities. But as full-grown man ! the strength, the vigour, the experience of masculine maturity combined with the 'guilelessness of childhood, the gentleness of woman. Who could obtain to the delineation of Him as such ? It would be nothing less than a new manifestation of the Godhead, the Deity made visible once more to human eyes.

Weary with pondering on his one idea, and half maddened with delay, the artist looked with straining, unseeing gaze toward the skies, over whose sunset gold clouds were beginning to gather, and his lips moved in half-unconscious prayer.

"Oh, Christ, if not from regard to Thy glory, then for the sake of mine, show me of Thy beauty ! Thou grantest desires less righteous, desires for pleasure, for gold. Have not I passed by the fairest faces, intent on Thine image only ? Have I not despised worldly gain and consecrated my gift to Thee ? Why should my longing alone be for ever baffled ? See, Lord ! I will give Thee till to-morrow night. If Thou deny me my soul's desire, if Thou still disdainest the help of my art, henceforth I will devote my talent to earthly things. Beautiful women, lovely children, will offer me their living faces to model from. I shall need no hidden labour of prayer, no special gift of grace. Henceforward my soul shall worship apart—if she needs must worship. Farewell the mystic dream ! No Christ shall any longer hinder my art. The beauty and love of earth shall yet establish in me their claims to divinity."

* * * *

"Signore, there is a man at the door says he is a model and would like to speak with you. Will you see him ?" It was his old landlord who spoke.

Paolo started like one roused from a dream. "A model ? ah, I am tired of them. What sort of a man, Vincenzo ?"

"He seems a stranger. Beautiful enough, but——" and the old man shrugged his shoulders.

"Admit him," said the artist.

Daylight was fading, and Paolo could only distinguish a man of majestic mien, with dark curling hair parted in the middle. He stood bareheaded in the shadow of the doorway, and the artist felt rather than saw his eyes fixed on him.

"Pardon, Signore," he began, in a voice whose silvery accents thrilled with an odd impression of familiarity on the artist's ear. "I am a stranger in Florence, but I have heard of the Signore's difficulty in obtaining a model for his work. Men have said"—he paused, and looked down with a deprecating air which sat strangely on him—"they have said I had a look of Christ."

He advanced a step, and the last ray from the setting sun fell full on his features. Heavens, what a face! It was the artist's ideal realised, his dream embodied. But did it satisfy him? His heart beat wildly, and a mist seemed to gather before his eyes. He passed his hand over them and looked again.

The stranger had drawn near and was gazing on him with the same curiously eager, modest yet confident air. Twilight had made rapid strides toward night, and his intent eyes seemed to have gathered into them all the radiance there was left.

Paolo lit the lamp. In the clear light it shed he beheld a countenance of rarest beauty, a face which, while it departed not entirely from the type generally ascribed to Christ's, was of a keener, more eager character, worn as with long thought and vigil, yet with an unquenchable energy expressed in every lineament.

The artist gazed upon it fascinated. Yes—it was the image on which his fancy had dwelt for years; a face so full of power that, were it transferred to canvas, its painter's fame would go with it down the ages. And yet what look was it that flitted across it, and was gone ere Paolo had divined its meaning? Ah, but now that he had found the form, could he not infuse what spirit into it he pleased? He had not brooded all these years on the divine image for nothing.

"You have come from far?" he said at last, breaking with difficulty on the silence which had fallen. "You are weary—and it seems to me that you have suffered."

"Ah, Signore, I have had many sufferings!" said the stranger.

"They will make you the fitter to sit for the Man of Sorrows," returned the artist. "Yes, yes, I see my soul's desire within my grasp! You are the very model I have been seeking. Whence come you, and by what name do you go?"

"They call me Serafino. I am but newly come to Florence. Trade has been poor in my home beyond the hills, and I came to this artist's-nest to see if my face might not earn me something. Excuse me, Signore, if the thought was vain. 'Twas not mine own. I was chosen once to play the part of Jesus in a Passion Play. And travelling over the mountains but now, I met a priest who crossed himself when he saw me, blessed me for my look of Christ, and wished me the peace of heaven."

A spasm crossed his face as he uttered the word *peace*, bringing to it such a troubled, yet scornful look as a ghost might wear in presence of living men who cannot divine of his state.

"Tell me, my friend," said Paolo, "how old are you? Your face is young, but the shadows of many years seem to lie on it. The courage of youth is there, yet one might think you had experienced every pang of which flesh—or else spirit—is capable."

"I am the age of Christ when He had finished His work on earth, and was led forth amid the mockery of foes, and the desertion of His friends, to death. Ah, poverino! He thought to save the world."

II.

The model was gone. Paolo stood by the open window. The city wore a visionary aspect in the early night. Giotto's lily tower and the heavy dome stood out equally dark from amid the gathered roofs and towers. Overhead a silvery young moon guided her light skiff between banks of purple-black and grey-white clouds through a stream of delicate blue. Suddenly it was swallowed up, and the clouds gathered again. The little blue still left in the sky turned to pale lilac, and was then obscured.

The sound of a bell from some distant campanile came borne over the Arno. There was something inexpressibly appealing in its tone. It seemed to mourn the departed day. It called to him as with a thousand memories, and stirred a mighty longing in his heart.

That night strange dreams troubled the artist's sleep. He thought to paint the Christ upon His Cross. Once and again the picture grew under his hands with the rapidity of dream-work. It seemed at the same time as if he were assisting at the actual scene of the Crucifixion. The Cross was raised. The Saviour hung upon it in His death-agony. Then darkness fell. Through the murky air broke a flash of lightning, and illuminated the sufferer's features. "So, it is Judas—it is Judas!" cried the crowd. "Look at the smile on his face!" And from far, mingling with the crash of thunder, came a cry that seemed to rend the heavens.

He woke trembling and bathed in sweat. The mists gradually cleared from his brain. But still for a while he was haunted by that spectre of the false apostle hanging on the tree.

"Is it a sin," he pondered, "that I should seek, as others have done, to depict the form of the Son of Man? Is the blood that was shed for us too sacred that it should be painted starting forth to the pressure of the thorn-crown? Is it too much that a mortal should seek to portray His tears—the pallor of His cheek? The sun grew dark to hide His dying pain from men; but first Pilate had led Him forth before the people. Mine will be an *Ecce Homo* from which none will be able to turn away unheeding."

Dawn was breaking, and he lay awake till the tumult in his soul subsided. Then he rose and looked out again upon the beautiful city, lying bathed in its morning glory. The artist had recovered his hopes and his ambitions. The vision dispelled his last misgiving.

"This city," he mused, with a more confident courage than had ever animated him before, "the city of Michael Angelo, of Giotto, of Frà Angelico, shall yet be proud that I have lived and laboured in her midst. It will not be in vain that I have spent my golden years dreaming, dreaming over the face of Christ. The world shall yet know of my dreams. The work of my hands shall redeem those wasted years. All nations to come will bless my art."

He paused as the recollection of the stranger's face crossed his mind.

"But will the world love Him more for that Image of Him which my hands shall have wrought? Day and night, night and day, how it has haunted me, filling my whole heart as the image of their beloved fills the thoughts of other men. At last—at last I am to give it shape!"

Serafino was punctual to his appointment, and the artist set to work with feverish energy. An unusual experience awaited him. He was of those who work with difficulty. For every stroke fit to stand he was obliged to erase a score. But now, some unseen power seemed to guide his hand. He had anticipated trouble with his model. Those rarely-fashioned features held such varying and subtle expression, he had thought it would be hard to catch. But the face grew swiftly under his hand.

"Thank God!" he fervently exclaimed, "I have caught the very form."

The model smiled.

"You smile that I should thank God for this?" said the artist. "Nay, thank the Devil then!" A strange reckless mood had come over him.

"O sir, blaspheme not!" said the model. "Indeed, I am not used to hear profane words. And in truth you need thank no one. You, after your long course of labour and study, can obtain your desires without help from any one."

"My desires! what are they?" exclaimed Paolo. "The approving smile of Heaven, the praise of man—whatever is worth the having here and hereafter."

"The Signore will be famous yet!" cried Serafino. "The hope that mocked you will be realized. The vision that has so long haunted your dreams will be set for the world to gaze at."

"How came you to divine my thoughts?" asked Paolo. "Can those passionless eyes of yours see through me? 'Tis more than I can do with you. I am skilled to read the secrets of the human eye, but there is that in yours which baffles me. It slumbers now," he went on, speaking half to himself, "but terrible it would be for the expression of wrath or pain."

"Signore," the model interrupted him, "I will spare no trouble on my part to make your work a success. Pardon, but it seems to me your man of sorrows is like to look too placid. See now, I will put on a look of pain that will wring the heart of whosoever looks on it. My features shall writhe in the despair of death."

"Padre mio!" cried the artist, shading his eyes with his hand. "My friend, you should have been an actor, not a model. The centuries have rolled back all their days. I see Christ before me in His hour of humiliation and pain. How came to you that dreadful gaze? It almost seems the blood-drops have started to your brow."

He drew rapidly, holding his breath, while the model kept his strangely realistic look unmoved.

After a time Paolo, with a deep sigh, threw down his brush. "It is enough," he said; "I have done what might have taken me a month in a less inspired mood."

Serafino went over to where the artist stood, and critically regarded his work. "It is perfect!" he said with a soft laugh.

Paolo glanced quickly at him. The look of pain still lingered on his features, as if it belonged there.

III.

At the second sitting the work went on even more swiftly. The look of anguish in the pictured Christ grew terrible. The artist's hand trembled as he put in the touches which yet cost him scarce an effort. His heart began to misgive him, but he would not pause.

"Bravely! bravely!" he cried to his model. "One would think you had been there when the Christ was mocked and tortured—that you were one of the crowd who waited on His sufferings—one of the disciples who forsook Him—perhaps Peter who denied——"

"Or else Judas who betrayed Him," put in the model again, with that soft laugh which grated on the artist's ears. "Pardon, Signore, I can never refrain from a jest, however untimely," and he composed his features. Their expression was the same as on the previous day, yet somehow a different look had begun to creep into the pictured face; a shade of gloom and wrath was mingling with its anguish.

Paolo stood absorbed before his work after his model had left. In much it fulfilled his dream. There was something great, something superhuman in it. The majesty of form; the look that seemed to tell of high pretensions put to open scorn, of the heart whose secret none might share; the prophecy of coming woe; the tale of glory past, of strange communion with far-off things—all these were there. But something within him cried out against it. "'Tis not the face of Him who was wont to bless my dreams, of Him who stilled the troubled waters into peaceful blue, who chided His disciples' fears, who took the little children in His arms——"

"Santa Maria! What is the Signore painting? Is it the Christ?—for the crown of thorns is on His brow. It makes me shudder!"

It was Teresina, his landlord's young wife, who spoke. A pretty girlish creature, of that fair beauty sometimes to be met with in Tuscany, and with the freedom of speech and manner of a spoiled child. Vincenzo, an ugly, shaggy-looking old man with gleaming, coal-black eyes and ill-formed features, was maniacally jealous of his lovely prize, and kept her as much as possible out of sight. But the artist was looked on, by him as well as by others, as one apart, and Teresina

was allowed to wait on him. She had now entered the studio with his coffee.

Paolo was accustomed to her outspoken criticisms. "Why, what is there amiss with it?" he asked, with unusual sharpness.

"Oh, it's beautiful," returned the girl. "But it is not *Gesù*!" and she gave a flippant little laugh.

Following, as it seemed to him, the gaze of the pictured Christ, Paolo looked at the girl. Her fair young loveliness struck him as if he had never set eyes on it before, and his casual glance changed into an expression of such open admiration, that Teresina's mirthful eyes drooped beneath it, and the colour deepened in her cheek.

At that moment Vincenzo looked in. He was accustomed to seeing his wife in the studio, and knew her beauty to be no more to the artist than the beauty of a picture. But now he caught that look of more than personal interest. The old man scowled and roughly beckoned Teresina away.

IV.

Paolo had in a manner attained his wish. His long-dreamed-of picture was assuming form. In its new aspect it had taken such complete possession of his soul, he had almost forgotten the look his ideal Christ had worn. Less and less meanwhile did his heart dwell on the divine Image. Wild exultation alternated in his breast with fits of gloomy distrust.

One day when this latter mood was on him his friend Pieri entered the studio. A successful practical worker in the everyday walks of art, he had long deplored Paolo's talents wasted, as he deemed them, on an idle dream. Yet it was to his consistent encouragement Paolo owed it that his courage had not drooped. Pieri approached the easel.

"Per Bacco, is that your Christ?" he exclaimed, with an involuntary start of horror, as his eyes fell on the canvas.

Paolo looked at him angrily. "Has it not the good fortune to please you?" he asked, with ill-concealed scorn.

"Nay, it is wonderful!" returned the other, laying his hand kindly on the artist's shoulder. "I have seen nothing like it—though there is something half-familiar in it too. But forgive me, Paolo! It is not a picture I should like to be alone with in the dark. What life is in it!"

"It is not finished," interrupted Paolo hastily.

"But one can see to what it is growing! He looks like one who has no fellowship with any man—not like Him who loved the world and died to save it."

Suddenly, and as it seemed unaccountably, Paolo lost control over himself. The word of criticism had acted as a spark on gunpowder. He flung Pieri's hand from off his shoulder. "You are jealous," he

cried, in a voice that shook with fury. "You envy me my certain fame, the accomplishment of my life-long dream, you—you—whose ambition never rises above sordid gain."

Pieri looked at him amazed. "You know not what you say. You are not yourself!"

"Hypocrite!" cried Paolo, "you would divert me from my prize when it is just within my grasp—you would seek to frighten me from the fulfilment of my glorious task. But no! not the Devil himself shall do that! The world shall ring with my name——"

"It may, for aught I care," returned the other, roused at last.

"Go! go!" said Paolo. "I would wish never to see your face again."

Paolo was conscious of no sense of remorse as his friend slowly quitted the room, as if half expecting to be called back by a relenting word. He stood engrossed before his work.

"What is it that offends in the picture?" he mused. "Where lies the flaw?"

Its look of anguish reproached him. "Am not I thy dream fulfilled?" it seemed to say. "Is it not through me that fame shall come to thee?—that thou wilt take thy place amongst the immortal sons of art? Now mayest thou take thy pleasure in the world. Thy life's work is accomplished."

V.

Teresina had not been in the studio since the day her husband had caught the look the artist had fastened on her, and Paolo, for all his pre-occupation with the picture, pondered unaccountably over her image. Meeting her by chance one evening on the stairs, he was seized with a sudden uncontrollable impulse. Her bright fair beauty fired his blood. He threw his arm around her and kissed her cheek.

"O Signore!" cried the girl, more frightened and surprised than angry; "you who are painting the Lord Jesus, whose thoughts should be all in Paradise!"

"Thou art my Paradise!" returned the painter with a wild gesture.

She darted a terrified glance below. Her quick ear had apparently caught a sound which escaped the artist; and breaking from him, she hurried away.

But old Vincenzo guessed nothing of that meeting, nor yet of others. The young wife had learned to set his suspicions to sleep.

It was an oppressive, restless evening. The sun was declining, not with the farewell flood of light in which he is wont to steep the city of flowers, but with angry crimson hue. A strange tumult was in Paolo's breast. It seemed as if some evil presence were in the room, taunting him with a sense of blessing missed, of doom incurred. He saw the desire of his life turning, even in its fulfilment, into a curse.

Gradually his conflicting fancies resolved themselves into a coherent

train. A vision unfolded itself before his mind's eye. His picture hung for the world to gaze at. Shifting crowds pressed forward to obtain a sight of it, and the artist's name was passed from one to another with exclamations of wonderment and praise. He could see into the souls of those who looked. No impulse of faith, of love, of penitence, of striving after better things, was stirred in any. The expectant thrill of worship with which some had drawn near gave place, beneath the picture's spell, to a feeling of exultant pride at the genius of the artist. And in this moment of prophetic insight, he could follow the after-effects of his work on those who gazed. A young priest turned from it, his purpose of consecrating himself to God by a life of active service to his fellows changed into a dream of self-aggrandizement. A man who had fallen out with his wife, and was bent on reconciliation, looked into the pictured face, and his extinguished anger rekindled into fierce heat, till he conceived a cruel revenge. A poet whose songs breathed of hope and immortality drew in dark inspiration from the gaze of the agonized Christ, and henceforth gave out nothing but utterances of doubt and despair. A woman who had been battling for herself and her children single-handed against an adverse fate lost courage as she looked at it, and went forth to sink into a life of misery. An honest fanatic was converted through its influence into an impostor, a patriot into a traitor.

Paolo broke off with a violent effort from his troubled reverie. Glancing round uneasily, his eyes fell on a mirror. He caught the gaze of the pictured Christ reflected in it. Merciful heavens! Its look of agony was converted into a leer. While he gazed trembling and transfixed with horror, the impression passed.

"It was my fancy fooled me," thought Paolo.

Just then the model entered.

The artist, scarce yet recovered, scanned his face intently, comparing it with the picture. Surely it had undergone some transformation since the night of his first visit. Had there not then been something angelic, something divine, in its look of patient suffering?

"Surely—surely," he broke forth, in a sort of desperation to find his work approaching completion and failing so strangely of his original conception, "you did not look like that," and he nearly flung the back of his hand against the picture; "you did not look so when you offered yourself as model."

Serafino smiled deprecatingly. "Ah, Signore! a man cannot always command his countenance. My face was fixed to the look of pain—but my heart follows its own thoughts."

"Your own thoughts?" impatiently exclaimed the artist. "What are they? Cannot you fix your thoughts on that?" He pointed to a wooden crucifix in the corner.

"There are darker crosses than Christ's," said the model. "I too have hung on one. I have drained a bitterer cup than His—drained it?" he gave a mocking laugh. "There is no draining it! It is

always full to the brim. He has borne all He had to bear. Pain and death have finished with Him. Will they ever have finished with me !”

“You speak presumptuously,” said the artist sternly. “His pain and death were for others. He endures them again whenever the road to heaven, marked by His blood, is missed by poor blind men.”

Serafino drew near, and intently regarded the picture. It took a shadow from his form. “Yes, yes,” he said, “the shadow of forgotten wrong will rest on His face through all ages to come. Not all the worship and gratitude of men, for whom He gave His life; not all the love of angel hosts, will ever avail to atone for it. The light and song of heaven will never efface that hour of shame and darkness which blots Eternity for Him. He is alone the man of sorrows still ! God himself has no power to erase that memory, to reverse His pain, to gladden Him once more with His glory.”

“You seem to triumph in the thought of his grief,” said the artist.

“I ?—nay !” replied Serafino. “I only desire that all may profit by His example. That those who are at ease, lifted high above the ills and troubles of striving, poverty-stricken humanity, may remember Christ, and how He parted from His joy, His life, His glory——”

“Amen ! Amen !” put in the artist fervently.

A dark frown crossed the model’s face. “I had not finished,” he said. “I would have added—and may all who look on it be filled with a sense of the vanity of sacrifice. May they be wakened from their dreams of eternal compensation to the pursuit of what the present has to offer, lest in leaving the substance for the shadow they lose both.”

The artist stared at him appalled. “You put a curse upon my work,” he said. “You yourself have been a curse ! Coming in the semblance of the form I craved, you have robbed me of my ideal—of the image of Christ, pure and perfect, that dwelt within me.” His passion blazed up as he spoke. “How could I think to paint the Christ while my heart was playing the traitor to Him——”

“You are over-scrupulous !” interrupted Serafino coolly. “Are those always of the holiest character who preach the most powerful sermons ? Have not artists of coarse worldly nature, even of known evil lives, infused the very spirit of purity and tenderness into their saints, their madonnas, their very Christs ? Your Christ may be other than you intended,—but was not your talent God-given ? Florence may well lament her lack of masters when her painters have no longer the courage of their genius. Will your work less move men to adoration because it has won you fame ?”

“Till I began upon it,” broke in Paolo, “my life was in keeping with my dreams”—he stopped, choked with grief and passion.

“Chè, chè !” sneered the model. “You make a great deal of a little thing. One would think you had committed a crime.”

The artist flashed a glance at Serafino. A smile hovered about the model's mouth, but his inscrutable eyes gave no sign.

"Deliberately to lower one's standard of right is the greatest crime of all," said Paolo bitterly.

VI.

That night, starting suddenly, whether from sleep or from some waking reverie he could not have told, Paolo heard sounds of altercation in the chamber overhead,—the voice of Vincenzo, fierce and threatening, the passionate crying accents of the young wife. The next moment there was a heavy fall on the pavement below. It sent a thrill to his heart such as the fall of no inanimate body could have caused. He sprang to the window and threw it wide. A wind blew straight on his face; a chill, unfriendly wind.

The city was steeped in brilliant moonlight which gave the effect as of a spectral day. A crowd had collected beneath his window, gathered tumultuously around a dark object that lay prone on the ground. Paolo could distinguish figures. There bent old Vincenzo, his grizzled locks blown by the wind, over a huddled form lying with white face upturned to the sky, with wild gesticulations appealing now to one or another amid the crowd, now to the fallen figure on the pavement, now to the moonlit heavens.

A dark form crossed the street. The artist recognised his model. Serafino drew near so quietly that no one seemed to perceive him. He turned with cold, dispassionate looks from one to another. Once he trod on the fallen woman's hair. Then, glancing upwards, his eyes met Paolo's, who returned his gaze as if fascinated. The model's eyes gleamed bright in the moonlight with the peculiar deadly, mocking smile he knew so well. "This is *our* work!" they seemed to say.

Sick with horror, Paolo drew back from the window. The moonlight streamed into his room. It fell upon the pictured Christ.

The next moment Serafino stood before him. The look of malignant triumph on his face goaded the artist to frenzy. Without a thought but of gratifying the rage that possessed him, he turned on the beautiful mocking being, who had suddenly assumed for him the aspect of a deadly foe, and struck him in the face. His arm was nerveless, or Serafino was panoplied in invisible armour, for the blow fell harmless. He struck again and again, but always with the same effect.

A cold fear crept over the artist. A sense of deadly peril overcame him, of having been beguiled and tricked to his own eternal undoing. He fought as if for his life, if that could be called fighting in which the opponent offered no resistance. The model stood mute and motionless, still with that cold, mocking smile upon his face. Once and again Paolo's courage well-nigh failed him. His strength was as

nothing in the contest. "By the blood of Christ," he cried, at last in a transport, "begone!"

A darkness fell, through which gleamed a blinding flash—and Paolo awoke. All that had passed had been a troubled dream.

A flood of distorted terrified reflection swept over him. Wild, half-forgotten legends thronged unbidden to his mind. Spirits seemed to be calling to him from every side. As in a flash of moral lightning, his own dreams of self-glory were revealed to him. He saw his mad ambition, his presumptuous folly in their true colours. What terrible temptation was it to which he had yielded! "My God!" he cried in affrighted reverence, "and it was in such a spirit I thought to paint the Christ."

In a shadowed corner of the room stood a common wooden crucifix. The figure that hung so patiently upon it, the homely peasant figure with its look of kindly suffering that yet had in it something divine, seemed to draw him as with a promise to help and comfort. He fell prostrate before it, his face buried in his hands.

"O Christ! the meanest representation of Thy form, the lowest outrage on art, yet wrought with a single heart, hath in it something of Thee. While mine, the outcome of years of thought and vigil, of anxious weary labour, is nothing but a betrayal—but a slander on Thy sacred Image!"

In an agony of self-abasement he leaned his brow against the base of the Cross. There was something in its touch that brought peace and healing to his soul. The fevered dreams which had so long haunted him, quitted their possession of his heart, like a flock of dark-winged birds. Time and space had ceased for him. He was alone with God.

Hour after hour passed. The moonlight faded. There was a brief spell of darkness. Then the dim blue dawn stole once more over the city.

Paolo raised his head and looked about him bewildered. He was on his knees before the crucifix. He stole a trembling, half-eager, half-reluctant glance at his easel. What miracle was this? The canvas was bare. No strange and yet familiar, wild, mocking face looked forth on him in agony. In the early morning stillness he heard the voice of Teresina singing at her work.

In a strange rapture that yet was not the ordinary rapture of the artist, Paolo seized his brush. Through streaming tears that seemed to wash his vision clear, he traced an outline. The drops from his eyes splashed down upon the palette. He mixed his paints with tears.

A face gradually grew upon the canvas. He himself was awed by the divinity that stole into it. But neither was this the Christ of his dreams. No expressed blessing was in His look. Neither earth nor heaven was in view of those rapt eyes. And yet a promise of light and immortality glimmered from beneath the half-closed lids. A wondrous peace emanated from the worn features.

It was the Saviour absorbed in His own dream of salvation, shut out from the world, shut out even from His Father's smile.

The face seemed to float in light before the artist. He painted as from a living copy. And yet the picture was veiled as by some mysterious shadow. It bore a strange indefiniteness of form and feature.

"The work is not mine," he thought; "I am not worthy even to be the instrument."

* * * * *

Two men were standing before a picture of Christ in one of the Academies of Florence. It was a mere sketch, but more instinct with life than if it had been of finished execution. It seemed as if the painter had had a glimpse of the real face of Christ, His loving, sensitive face, stamped with the secrets of eternity. A face of such unforced expression that you wondered wherein its strength lay; and as you gazed its secrets grew upon you. For all its look of love and pity, the most striking attribute of the picture was its expression of almost terrible power. It was the countenance of one against whom nothing could stand.

The two men gazed upon the picture with something of awe. One of them, a dark, keen-eyed, kindly-looking man, was unmistakably an artist; the other a visitor in Florence.

"And this was his last work?" said the stranger.

"Yes," returned the artist. "It had been the dream of his life to accomplish such a picture, and have his name go down to posterity linked with the fame of it. I knew him well. A visionary, yet full of personal ambition. The idea wrought upon him till he had worn himself almost into a fever with it, as well as with prayer and fasting."

"And he did not live to elaborate the work?"

"When the inspiration came to him," said the artist, "which was very suddenly at the last, he threw his whole remaining strength into the carrying of it out. With the last strokes his life ebbed from him. I saw him just before the end, a wasted enthusiast on his knees before his work. And he might have done such great things!"

"You have not told me his name," said the stranger.

"Nay, that I cannot; it was his last expressed wish that his name should never be mentioned in connection with the picture. It was, he said, his atonement for the long dream of self-glory he had cherished, the only sacrifice he could offer in return for the favour that had been vouchsafed him."

PAULINE W. ROOSE.



THE MOSQUE OF HASSAN.

By CHARLES W. WOOD, F.R.G.S., AUTHOR OF "THROUGH HOLLAND," "LETTERS FROM MAJORCA," ETC., ETC.



THE MOSQUE OF EL HAKIM.

THE moments passed insensibly. The world was sleeping; our time was our own. From the top of the minaret we gazed upon this wonderful City of the Dead lying under the moonbeams. Imagination was stimulated to the highest degree by the darkness, by the weird cold moonlight and its ghostly shadows, by the silence that enveloped the world like a funeral mantle, by thoughts and emotions that chased each other through heart and brain. The moon travelled onwards, and constellations rose and set, before we attempted to take our last look at the Tombs of the Caliphs.

"Yet one more experience," said Osman. "I have now made you acquainted with one of the marvellous

scenes of earth. We have gazed upon this dead world in the very dead of night, when the busy world about us might be dead also, for all evidence to the contrary. Let us go forward whilst the moon is yet high enough to give her light and cast her shadows. Having looked down upon a dead world, we will now enter a dead world and look upwards; the dead about us will be more limited in number, but the silence will be as solemn, and the solitude as perfect."

We turned and began to descend the narrow staircase. As we neared the end, again the faint glimmer of light appeared, guiding our footsteps, casting the ghostly custodian into deeper shadow. He made no sound and seemed to make no movement, yet the door opened as mysteriously and noiselessly as before, and we passed out. With a deep reverence, with no word spoken, he closed the door, which seemed to fasten of its own accord, with his lantern he threw unsteady rays on road and wall and ruined mosque, and finally disappeared down a narrow aperture, which led to the small colony existing on the outskirts of the tombs. We listened for the faintest echo of a footstep, but heard none.

"Are you exercising more magic than you promised us?" we asked of Osman. "Like the Witch of Endor, have you summoned a spirit from the dead, and has a ghost waited upon us in this ghostly place?"

"It might well be," laughed Osman. "Time and place and opportunity are all favourable to the event. But I have not the power of magic. Ghosts come not at my summons any more than they did for the Witch of Endor. You may be sure that was the first and the last she ever raised, and it came not at her bidding, but at the command of a Higher Power and to punish her. After that unexpected experience, depend upon it she never meddled again with the supernatural. Our late attendant was no ghost. This is not my first visit by many to the moonlit Tombs of the Caliphs, nor his first attendance upon me. He knows I never allow the charm to be broken by word or sound, and to-night, as I was not alone, he realised that he had to be more silent than ever. It is wonderful how noiselessly most of them can walk; the power of motion without sound. A ghost would not move more quietly."

We were passing away from the Tombs, leaving them to their solemn stillness and repose. Our footsteps alone faintly roused the echoes; nothing but our hushed voices disturbed the air. The brilliant moonbeams threw lights and shadows deep as those of day upon road and ruin. The minarets and cupolas of the solemn tombs stood out in this ghostly pallor with almost every detail visible. Thrilling indeed would it have been to have now heard the voice of the Muezzin ringing out over the sleeping world his summons to the faithful: "Prayer is better than sleep! Allah! Allah! Allah! There is no God but God!"

But the hour of dawn was still very far off.

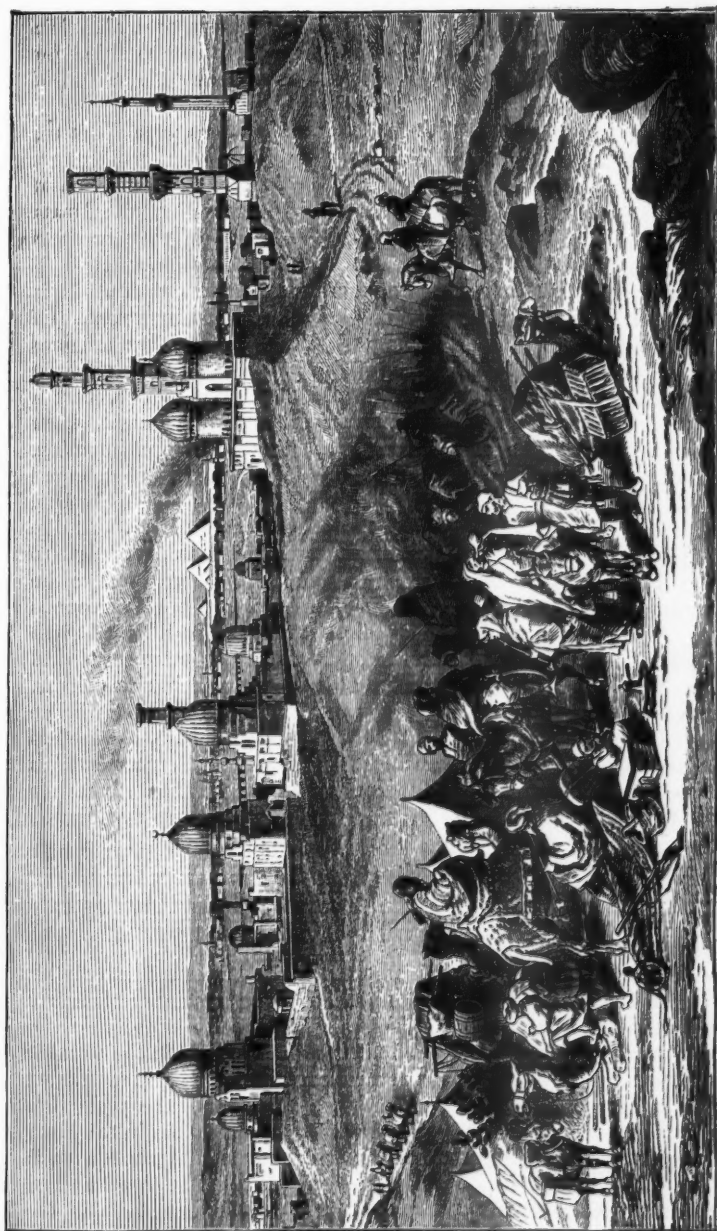
It was almost pain to find ourselves beyond the boundaries of this solemn and mysterious, this matchless region. We were leaving behind us what we probably should never see again; certainly never under the same conditions, or with Osman for our guide, companion, and friend. And even if the fates so willed that on some future and unknown occasion the exact circumstance would be repeated, there would still be a mighty difference.

In spite of Osman's assurance, the supreme incidents of life which have on rare occasions fallen a second time to our lot, have never been the same. They never are for any one. Imagination having raised the first to a paradise not of earth, nothing of earth can again approach it. Such moments—not to speak of things mental and psychological—have been those when we first gazed upon the Alhambra by moonlight; first sat amongst the ruins of Pompeii, and the tragedy of that first century passed before us in all its terrible reality, whilst our eyes rested upon the author of all the woe: burning, smoking Vesuvius: a little stream of molten lava trickling down its side, ashes and smoke shooting upwards, as if the artillery of some demon foe were bidding defiance to Heaven itself; the deep blue sea in the Bay of Naples calm as a river, beautiful as a dream; the far-reaching coast, the distant Island of Capri, rising like a vision out of a golden haze; the sun in its meridian; the blue of the azure—true azure—undimmed by a cloud.

Such a moment was this, when we gazed for the first time upon the Tombs of the Caliphs by moonlight, whilst Osman poured out the magic of romantic eloquence in those subdued tones of his which were music in themselves. Some of these experiences have fallen to our lot a second or a third time, and we have said: "Now for a supreme moment: now for thoughts and emotions which will raise one to Paradise." But they have not come at our bidding: nothing ever does. The second experience has been cold and disappointing: we have trembled lest our love for the beautiful, our conception of the sublime, should be loosening. But it is only imagination that has worked the mischief: the third experience, from which we have expected little, has restored the balance. The first pressure of the grape is the sweetest; it must ever be so; it is so even in that master-passion of which all poets have sung. Our first supreme love is a reality as powerful as it is generally short-lived; and when it dies, "the song has left the bird." Second love may be more lasting, pure, elevating, all this; but it is not the Fool's Paradise in which for a moment we dwelt. Fool's Paradise only because it could not last; real and earnest enough in every other respect.

We passed out of the charmed circle, leaving one of our supreme moments behind us. We stood without the boundaries of the Tombs of the Caliphs. There, in the cold moonlight, stood carriage and servants, immovable as if they formed part of the dead world around. Osman said a few words to them in their unknown tongue; they responded with a silent reverence, and we walked on, leaving them behind us. Afterwards we knew that he had told them to remain where they were for half-an-hour, and then follow leisurely to a given direction.

That moonlight walk through the deserted thoroughfares was one of our pleasantest experiences of Cairo. The vast spaces about us seemed boundless in the comparative obscurity. Distant monuments



AT THE FOOT OF THE CITADEL.

stood out with weird effect. A sense of repose was over all. We had the world to ourselves ; stars and moon seemed to shine for us alone : moon twice as brilliant, twice as large as the moons of our Western skies.

We had left our City of the Dead, but many others were about us, though less ancient and interesting.

Away to the south-west, surrounded by other tombs over which it seemed to keep watch and ward, was the great tomb of the Imam esh-Shafeeh, who founded, we may remember, one of the four sects of El Islam, and died in the year 820 full of age and honours.

The tomb is said to have been built by the great Saladin. It is large, and the interior has been modernised and not improved. Of its four niches, one of course points the way to Mecca, that religious *Ultima Thule* of the true follower of the Prophet. By day the light enters through coloured windows, which, though not good, cast a subdued and effective gloom upon the interior. At night, when illuminated for some special occasion, it is far more imposing. Porcelain lamps are suspended from the dome. Lamps of coloured glass hang from the canopy overshadowing the tomb of esh-Shafeeh, which is adorned with a covering of rich gold embroidery. At the head lies a turban partly covered by a cashmere shawl, supposed to have been worn by the saint. The centuries have been kind to the garments. A wooden railing inlaid with mother-of-pearl surrounds the tomb ; and a marble pillar close at hand is adorned with sculptured inscriptions in red and gold. Ostrich eggs are suspended from the canopy, on which the little lamps throw their rich colours. Above the dome, a vane, in the form of a boat, tells you whence comes the wind, which can be kindly and cruel here, as in less favoured lands : sometimes raising those fierce and fiery sandstorms before which even the Arab of the desert flies for very life. It is then that the fleet foot of the camel does good service to its master, and proves once again how wonderfully the law of adaptation, the eternal fitness of things, governs the world : the ordering and disposing, not the result of chance, but of Divine Wisdom.

We had no sandstorm to-night. Still was the air and cloudless the sky. To our right the Citadel reared its proud head. A sentinel looked down upon us. Here the Mameluke Ameen Bey took his wonderful leap over the breastwork, saved by the bravery of his horse, on that memorable day when Mohammed Ali invited all the Mameluke Beys, numbering nearly five hundred, to a banquet within the Citadel, and then put a terrible end to their rapacious reign by murdering them all in cold blood. Yet they were shielded by the protection which the sacred laws of hospitality most especially enjoin in the East.

It seems almost impossible that this century should contain such a record : but it all happened in the year 1810. The five hundred horsemen, richly caparisoned, presenting a dazzling spectacle in the flashing sunshine, approached the gate of el-Ayab. A signal gun was

fired, the rattling shots of the Albanians, covered by the walls, fell volley after volley, and in less time than it takes to describe, the reign of the Mamelukes was a matter of history, and that of Mohammed Ali was established.

We half shuddered as we thought of it all to-night in treading almost the very ground where the blood of the murdered Mamelukes had run in streams. In imagination we saw again the leap taken by that brave horse, which enabled its master to escape into Spain and there found a new order of Mamelukes: whilst in the Citadel of Cairo Mohammed Ali in the flush of victory and success was proudly echoing the words used long before his day and under more peaceful skies: "*Le roi est mort, vive le roi!*"

As we entered the Place Roumeeleh there issued forth from the other end, with strange and startling effect, one of those processions of Dervishes already described. They had been to worship, in their own peculiar and semi-barbarous way, at the tomb of one of their favourite saints. A weird procession, not more than ten in all, moving with ghostly steps. Two of their lanterns were lighted; the others they had apparently extinguished. Gleams from these lanterns mingled strangely with the lights and shadows thrown by the moon. In the great open square the little group looked almost lost. If they perceived us, they probably wondered why three apparently peaceful citizens, with no visible object in view, were patrolling the deserted, moonlit streets of Cairo in the dead of night. Poetry and romance, the unspeakable repose of Nature under the silent moonbeams, that wonderful City of the Dead, the Tombs of the Caliphs beneath the same witching influence: of all this they knew nothing. Happy beings with limited sensibilities, their spiritual cravings found rest in midnight pilgrimages to saints' tombs, in dismal howlings and frenzied whirlings. The soul's higher aspirations; the pain of unfulfilled desire; the intense longing for perfection—that seeking after holiness never to be quite found on earth by mortal man: these things were a sealed book to them.

They disappeared like silent shadows to the left of the Mosque of Hassan, in front of which at that moment we were standing. The building looked almost sublime in the moonlight, with exaggerated dimensions that seemed immeasurable to man. The dome rose in lofty proportions, large and solemn; the minaret, the highest in Cairo, or in existence, seemed to touch the dark canopy of the skies. The great square itself, bounded by the rock bearing the citadel, had the appearance of a small desert: crowded by day with its picturesque Eastern groups, now silent and deserted as the dead city we had so recently left. Deep lights and shadows were all around us.

Passing to the right of the Mosque, we reached the great porch with its wonderful ornamentations, the high walls above terminating in their magnificent cornice.

Here again we seemed to be expected. A guardian at the head

of the steps made us another silent and solemn reverence, and opened the doorway through which we entered. Again we were in a charmed world. Within we found four or five men in Eastern garb, who proceeded at once to light torches and place themselves under Osman's direction.

"This is a little surprise for you," he said, turning to us, and speaking in those melodious tones that we have said were music. "To-morrow we will come and see this by daylight. I thought I would first show it to you by torchlight and moonlight. It is a matchless building; and though we cannot now discover all its beauties, its wonderful outlines will be thrown up with ghostly effect by the torches, whilst its immense distances will be lost in profound gloom: an almost 'Egyptian darkness.'"

We had entered a vestibule above which rose a well-proportioned cupola with stone arabesques, all thrown into a relief of light and shade by the torch-bearers.

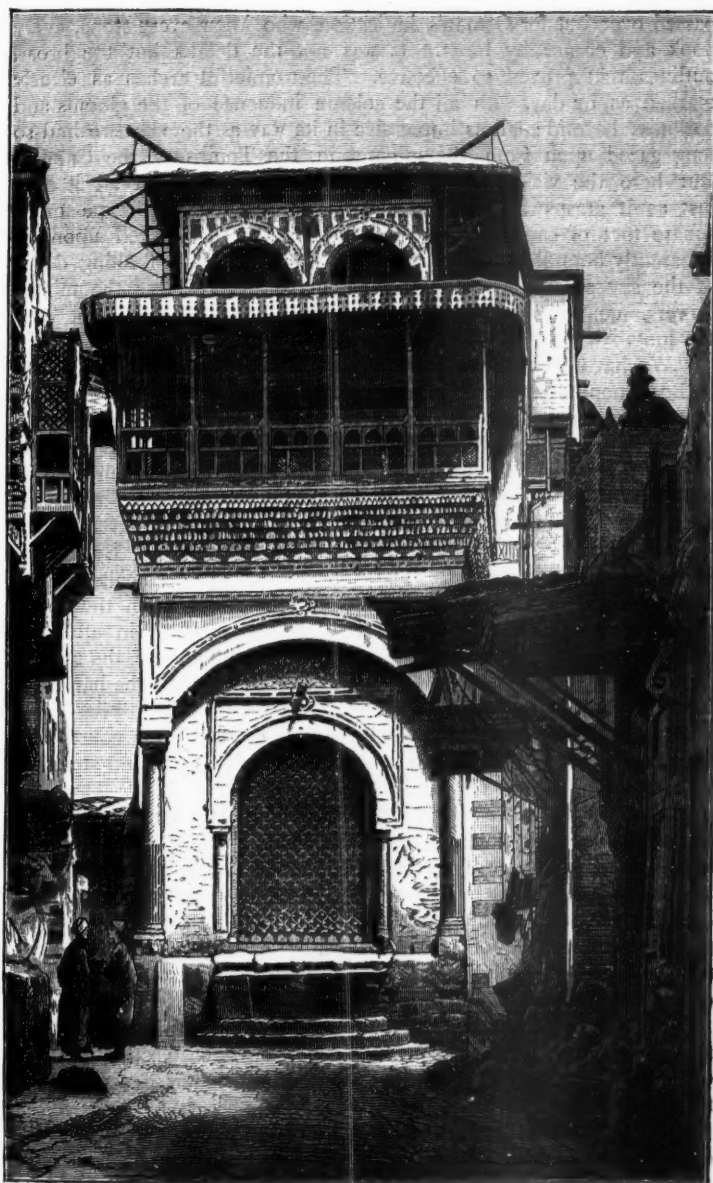
Here Osman bade them wait, whilst we passed alone into the great, square court.

The scene was strangely impressive, full of solemn mystery. In the centre of the court was a large fountain, and near it a smaller: the one used by the Egyptians, the other by the Turks. For in days not so long gone by Turks and Egyptians would have nothing to do with each other; even now there is no true fraternity between them. This court was open to the sky. The dark dome of night was above us, with its flashing stars and constellations. The moon, round as a shield, flooded the court with her light.

On each side there was a square recess covered by a magnificent arch; the building with these recesses forming almost a Greek cross. Thus it is evident that the architect of this wonderful Mosque of Hassan was under European as well as Eastern influence: a combination resulting in the finest building in Cairo, the grandest mosque in existence.

We were surrounded by arcades of pointed horseshoe arches, wonderfully effective, full of beauty and refinement. Where the moonbeams fell the pavement was chequered by strong lights and shadows, tracing the arches in slanting, foreshortened outlines: the space beyond thrown into mysterious darkness. Nothing could have been more coldly, purely beautiful. The silence and repose upon all seemed almost painfully evident: but above all other impression was a sense of harmony. The pavement was of coloured marbles.

As we approached the fountains we saw, even in the moonlight, that they were passing into dilapidation and decay. They are excellent examples of Arabian design. The larger is crowned by a round, Eastern-looking cupola, painted blue, bearing the familiar crescent; whilst the colour of the dome was interrupted by a broad belt bearing an inscription in gold characters. To-night all such details were only faintly perceptible, and much would have been



FOUNTAIN AND SCHOOL.



passed over but for Osman's indication, who knew every stone, every nook and corner by heart. It was not the details but the broad outlines that proved so effective. The wonderful arches as clearly marked as by day, with all the solemn influence of the glooms and darkness beyond: all as impressive in its way as the view we had so long gazed upon from the minaret in the Tombs of the Caliphs. But here the vision was bounded: the mind grasped all it saw, just as it grasps at a glance a wide, far-reaching landscape on a square foot of canvas. From the minaret we had gazed upon an apparently boundless world, for which the great, dark, flashing dome of the sky seemed not too large, not too lofty. Here the mind's powers, concentrated, were sooner satisfied. We did not stay too long.

"We have it our own way to-night," said Osman, "and forms and ceremonies can be dispensed with; but to-morrow, when we come to contrast our daylight with our moonlight impression, we shall have to put on straw shoes before treading this sacred pavement. Above all things I am careful not to offend their prejudices, which have all the strength of a narrow-minded people not allowed to think for themselves. Is not the scene unspeakably fine? Night and the moon have a mysterious influence upon the imagination. Everything is softened and subdued. The intense darkness appeals to our highest and most spiritual instincts. But the night is on the wane: we must not linger. Only, it is so delicious to revel in all these scenes and impressions when the world is sleeping and all the solemn hush and repose braces up the spirit and strengthens the hands for future work."

At a given signal, the torch-bearers entered the court, and immediately flooded it with an artificial glare which mingled strangely with the moonlight.

The effect was more weird, but the calmness and repose no longer existed. Unsteady glimmers, uncertain lights and shadows flitted and fell in all directions. The flames illumined the faces of the men, increasing the darkness beyond, but making them appear almost like demons from a lower world. Nothing could be more majestic than the appearance of the court, with its small arcades, its magnificent arches covering the recesses, and the immensely high walls enclosing all.

We left the court to the repose of the moonlight, the solemn night silence, and passing through the cupola-crowned vestibule found ourselves in a long passage, at the end of which was a semicircular recess.

Here Sultan Hassan is said to have given public audience in the days of his reign. The mosque itself was commenced in the year 757 of the Hegira—1356 of our own era. It took three years to build, at a cost of £600 a day. The walls are over 113 feet high, and in many parts 25 feet deep. According to the legend, Hassan,

when the mosque was completed, ordered the architect's hands to be cut off, in order that he might never build another; as though hands, not brain, had been responsible for the magnificent design. This legend has been handed down in connection with so many ancient buildings, that we may well give the wise and great Hassan the benefit of the doubt, and believe it untrue.

The previous reign, that of his father, Nasr, had existed forty-three years: and Cairo owes much to En-Nasr. He greatly enlarged it, and may almost be said to have left it a city of palaces. He founded many of the wells and many of the schools attached to the wells. The reader will remember that most of these wells have schools attached to them: rooms immediately above the wells, or larger houses in the immediate neighbourhood. Many are for orphans, and their endowment dates to long past ages. As the well of water was to supply the needs of the body, so the well of knowledge administered by the fakirs or schoolmasters should supply the needs of the mind; whilst the Koran, first and foremost in all instruction, should awaken and strengthen all the instincts of the soul. This ministering to the spiritual as well as the temporal wants of mankind was an act worthy of enlightened times; an excellent paraphrase, also, upon our Saviour's simile, who likened Himself to a well of water, of whom whosoever drank should never thirst.

En-Nasr founded many of these wells. His reign was a long one, and he was able to accomplish much. He seems to have borne a charmed life, for his enemies never succeeded in doing anything but occasionally deposing him. He ascended the throne when only nine years old, an age when he was completely in the hands of his unscrupulous Ameers: but, in the end, he conquered and established his rule.

Like most of his dynasty, he was a mixture of good and evil; capable of great achievements, and of great meanness and petty tyranny. He was extravagant in all his ideas, and to supply the calls on his exchequer would stoop to any injustice, even to breaking an oath. A long season of wise ruling, of brave deeds, would be followed by an outbreak of licentiousness and folly carried out with all his strength of purpose and earnestness of mind. As a conqueror he was great: extending his dominions from Abyssinia to Asia Minor, from Tunis to Bagdad.

His greatest achievement in arms was beating the Mongols in the plain of Merg as-Soffar, cutting to pieces their army of 100,000 men. When he returned from this victory, the people of Cairo made a great festival in his honour. Immense artificial basins were filled with lemonade for the use of the army; whilst for those in command rich banquets were prepared, at which wine flowed as water. The lavishness and waste were unbounded, and licentiousness ran riot. Not long after, an earthquake laid low a portion of Cairo, and many thousands of those who had been first and foremost in the festivals and

carousals lost their lives: the judgment of Heaven, said they who had looked on in condemnation.

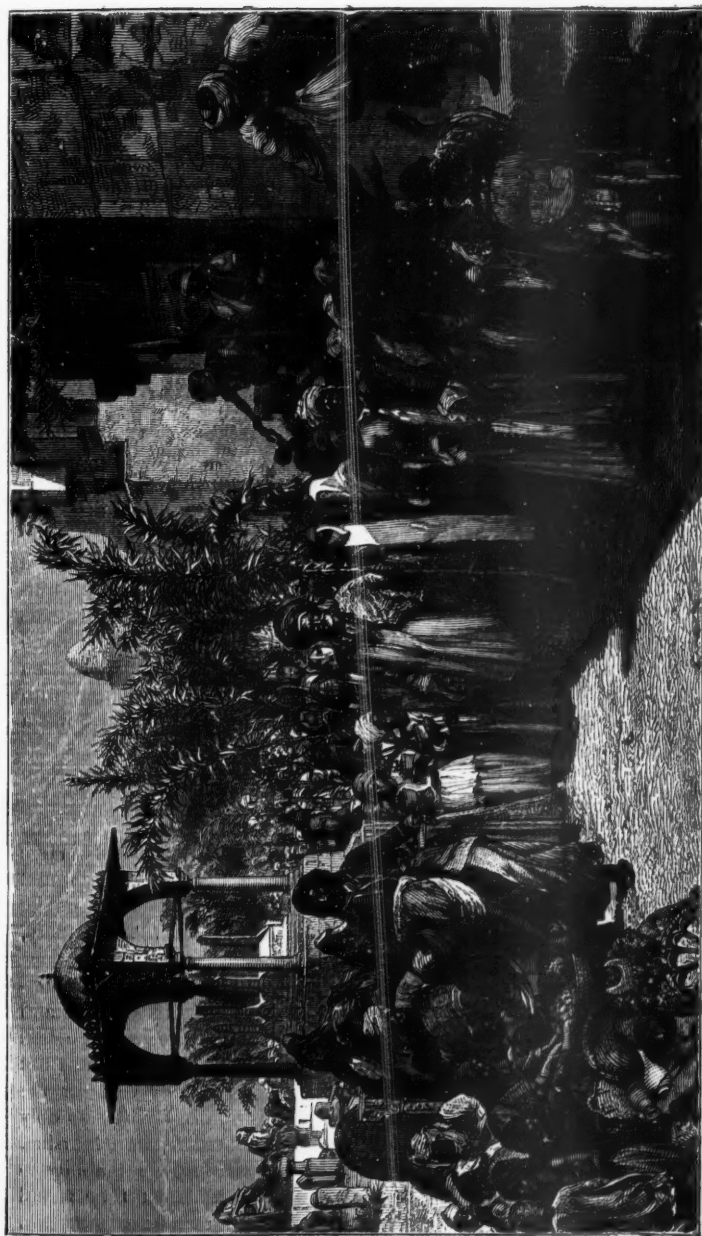
En-Nasr himself escaped all these troubles. He made himself popular with the people by granting them many indulgences, and they were ready to obey even his unreasonable requests. The Christians, however, had a hard time of it. Willing to conciliate them in the beginning, and to be kind to them, they managed to offend him, and so ruined their cause. The Christians were made to wear blue turbans, the Jews yellow, to distinguish them from the Moslems. The women wore a mark upon the breast. The men were not allowed to ride on horseback, which was considered too great an honour; and were only permitted to sit sideways on donkeys. They were deprived of all privileges, and were not allowed to hold any post of trust or authority. Tyranny ensued. The lower orders of Mohammedans ill-treated them, plundered their churches and synagogues, rendered their lives unbearable; until at last the Christians of other countries rose up to their rescue.

It was in the latter part of his reign that En-Nasr enlarged and beautified Cairo, quite regardless of expenditure and extravagance. He had not to pay the lower classes any wages, but merely to feed them, and yet he spent nearly £5,000 a day in planning and building. His palaces were large and splendid, and his Ameers, following his example, made themselves magnificent palaces also. He constructed canals, and turned the desert wastes into "fruitful wildernesses."

Many of the mosques date from his time. He was a great lover of horses, and is said to have once paid half a million for a horse on which he had set his fancy, rather than not possess it. He was at once full of strength and weakness. Though small and lame, he was of untiring energy and activity, and was devoted to the chase and to falconry. He encouraged learning, and was himself a man of considerable attainments. Yet he made few friends. No sooner was he dead than all his property was instantly seized; not even a pall, it is said, was found to cover his coffin. His funeral took place at night, under cover of the darkness, attended by only a few faithful emirs, a single lantern guiding their steps. A strange procession for a monarch, recalling some of the anecdotes of William of Normandy. Nasr left twelve sons behind him, not one of whom seems to have had the good feeling to follow his father to the grave. Six of them succeeded him one after the other in the space of five years; then Hassan ascended the throne, and after reigning fifteen years was assassinated. It was during his reign that the "Black Death" visited the country with especial ravages, and in one day nearly 20,000 people are said to have died in Cairo.

Amongst other good things that he did was the building of this wonderful mosque, from which for a moment we have wandered.

This mosque has always been a sort of "City of Refuge." Leaders of rebellions have here met in secret and formed their plans. Here



DISTRIBUTING DATES IN CEMETERY OF CAIRO.

the Arabs took shelter during the insurrection in Cairo on the 21st October, 1799. In the walls are still shown some of the cannon balls lodged there by Napoleon when he invaded Egypt. So that the old mosque has not been exclusively given over to worship and religious ordinances.

But to-night, as far as we could see and feel, it might for ever have been the abode of peace and harmony, a temple never desecrated by scenes of riot and bloodshed. The sombre passage with its stone benches down which we passed, was full of weird lights and shadows cast by the torch-bearers. We were a quiet, strange-looking procession and might have been bent on some subterraneous, supernatural task.

To the south-east of the building we entered the sanctuary, the largest of the four square recesses opening to the central court. This was the Holy of Holies. Here at the end was the Mihrab or prayer-niche, where the faithful may pray with their faces turned towards Mecca.

The walls are of many-coloured marbles, and there are four slender columns, ornamented with marble and porphyry decorations of somewhat debased style. Near these was the pulpit. The reading-desk was supported by three pilasters and eight small columns, roughly executed but effective in design. Over all our torch-bearers threw a weird light. Nothing was wanting but a crowd of kneeling worshippers to perfect the scene. Above, a large bronze candelabrum was hung, of remarkable workmanship. Two rows of vases in coloured glass were suspended from the walls, with the name of Hassan inscribed upon each. Above them was a frieze ornamented with light arabesques, upon which, encircling the whole sanctuary, was a prominent inscription in Cufic characters.

The whole decoration, so far as could be seen in this uncertain light, was gorgeous and splendid. Small lamps of curious workmanship and design were suspended from the great cross-beams. The sanctuary was especially designed for Sultan Hassan himself. Here he would retire for solitary prayer; and from the pulpit he would occasionally preach to an assembled crowd, or give forth public instructions. The people were not admitted within the sanctuary, but stood in the large open space without.

Hassan, like some of his predecessors, had not enjoyed an uninterrupted reign. More than once he was deposed by his jealous and ambitious Ameers; and during these periods of deposition he had studied theology. In preaching to the people, therefore, he was not without some knowledge of his subject. This speaks well for the earnest nature of his mind in the days of his youth, for he was only twenty-four when he was assassinated by his treacherous High Marshal.

There was probably a want of tact about Hassan, an inability to govern men by taking them in the right way: a defect time would have remedied in one who was really wise and earnest of purpose. His Ameers were too strong for him. The wretched Mameluke spirit

of pride and ambition and love of power was stronger than they, and nothing was allowed to stand in the way of their advancement. The immediate cause of revolt was that Hassan, who perhaps could judge men better than he could rule them, had placed about himself Egyptian and Arab officials to the exclusion of the Mameluke chiefs. This was too much for their vanity, and their vexed spirit rose in rebellion.

Hassan ought to have anticipated danger and treachery. It may be that he did so, but considered his Egyptians and Arabs sufficiently powerful to protect him: forgetting the strength and danger of an unseen foe, which, like a lie that is half a truth, is always the hardest to fight. The Mamelukes suddenly rose in revolt with irresistible force. Unprepared, Hassan fled from his enemies, was caught by his High Marshal Yelboghas, and basely murdered.

This was in the year 1361, and in 1382 the Baharite Mameluke Dynasty came to an end: to be succeeded by the Circassian Mameluke Dynasty, which in its turn in 1517 gave place to a Turkish Pashalic.

The Tomb Chamber of the Mosque of Hassan had been designed by him to be the resting-place of his body after death. It is a large, bare, deserted building, which impresses by its proportions. As we saw it to-night, in the uncertain light cast by the torches, it looked limitless. The great cupola above, rising to a height of 180 feet, was lost in the shadows. Even in the gloom we could see the ruin and decay that was going on.

The transition from the circular dome to the quadrangular walls is cunningly effected by brackets of the usual and very artistic honeycomb and stalactite design which marks a sort of transitional period between the flamboyant and the perpendicular. The sepulchre is in the centre of the chamber and bears the date of the Hegira 764, two years after the death of the Sultan. But the body does not repose here; it was never recovered after death, and what became of it was never known.

The Cairenes ignore this, and the Tomb Chamber is one of their favourite spots for offering up their prayers.

It is no less a public rendezvous for secular purposes. Here they meet in numbers and discuss business and the affairs of the day. In the extreme heat of summer its coolness and shade are grateful even to the fire-worshipping Egyptians. In the very face of this crowd, the ruin and destruction of the beautiful building are allowed to go on unchecked. The pendentives, worm-eaten, time-touched, are falling into fragments; the windows have lost their ironwork. The tomb is oblong in form, simple in design, and is turned towards Mecca. It is surrounded by an iron railing. On the tomb reposes a copy of the Koran, written by Hassan himself in large, fine characters. At the end of the chamber is a richly-ornamented Mihrab or prayer-niche.

The great mausoleum chamber looked solemn and sombre in the weird light in which we saw it. It seemed indeed a gloomy and fitting spot for the repose of the dead—though the dead rest not here. A dark stain on the pavement is said to be the mark of the blood of Hassan's Vizier, slain with the Sultan's own hand.

We turned and left it to its darkness and repose. The solemn corridors through which we once more passed were again full of fantastic lights and shadows. We gave one more glance at the open court, where the shadows cast by the moon were lengthening. Cold and pure, silent and solemn, enclosed in those high, impressive walls, it looked a world apart. At the entrance porch, so grand and matchless, of such enormous dimensions, the men extinguished their torches. The flickering lights and shadows disappeared, and with them the feeling that we were in a ghost-haunted atmosphere. In truth it was near cockcrow, and time for all respectable ghosts to depart.

At the foot of the shabby flight of steps—such a porch ought to have had a magnificent approach, and a series of steps rivalling the Valhalla—our carriage was waiting. The petrified servants had returned to life, and no doubt were willingly homeward bound. But Osman was esteemed amongst them; theirs was no mere lip and eye service; they were ready to perform wonders for him.

The streets were empty and deserted, yet after that solemn interior, the gloom and silence and space of that death chamber, it was a return to life and the world. Even the dark and shuttered houses looked animated. The sleeping guardians on the doorsteps were so many evidences of humanity, less pitiable than they had seemed earlier in the night. "Who passes by this way so late?" they probably asked of themselves, though, as far as we could see, they never moved or stirred. It only concerned them to bar their master's entrance. We woke the echoes as the horses went down at a quick gallop. We had wished to return to our own quarters. Osman would not hear of it. "You must come and be refreshed with coffee and Egyptian wines and baked meats," he declared. "Our experiences are exhausting, and the inner man must not be neglected. At your hotel they are all slumbering and sleeping; scarcely will a heavy-eyed porter find consciousness to unbar and unbolt to you. I am at home and we are expected."

So reaching the Esbekeeyeh Square, we turned to the left instead of the right, and soon found ourselves in the scenes of the earlier part of the evening.

It was difficult to realize whether hours or days had passed since a groom of the chambers had entered to announce that the carriage waited, so much had we gone through. Thoughts and emotions had crowded upon each other both when looking out upon a dead world from the minaret, and when enclosed in a dead world in the Mosque of Hassan. Now we had returned to light and brilliancy and warmth;



A CAIRENE COBBLER.

to refinement and luxury ; to a table spread with a slight but exquisite repast, to which perhaps only one of the three could do justice. H. was at a period of life when the hospitality of the festive board is seldom offered in vain. One almost envies this privilege of youth ; especially when to the "hectic flush of health" is added a clear eye and a good conscience. For the other two, the glamour and illusions of youth were over ; life's realities were making themselves heard. A curiously-shaped urn of rare workmanship and design was steaming near the table, upon which stood a silver coffee-pot. Egyptian wines of the best were there, but we would none of them.

"We will make the coffee ourselves," laughed Osman. "I am not clever at most of these things, but I can accomplish this simple matter to perfection. Watch the process, so that you may become as wise as myself in an art which is especially Eastern."

So, the mind unbending, we became children, and made and drank our coffee, and did not altogether neglect the delicacies so thoughtfully provided. Wisely too, for they stirred up fresh life and energy, and we felt fortified for the first glimmerings of dawn we saw in the east. The cocks were crowing when Osman bade us farewell on his very threshold, where the faint dawn lighted up his admirable countenance.

"As I said this morning, so I say now," he cried. "*A rivederci !* In a few hours we will meet again. We have seen the Tombs of the Caliphs by day and night ; the Mosque of Hassan by torchlight and moonlight ; we will now see it by daylight, as well as some of the other mosques in Cairo. No capital is so rich in these marvellous buildings ; and they are of many periods and in every stage varying between perfection and decay. At ten o'clock I will call for you."

The quiet walk back to the hotel in the early morning was a delicious experience, and was over too soon. The sleepy night porter, as Osman had predicted, was scarcely conscious enough to open to us. He was in his last heavy slumber and needed much arousing.

H. made straight for his room, where no doubt he was soon dreaming of moonlit worlds and festive boards. But the fragrant coffee had fairly aroused us ; the hour for sleep had passed and Somnus had fled ; a wakeful pillow is one of life's burdens ; we knew it by experience, having "passed that way," as the French so well put it.

So we quietly climbed up to the roof and sat amongst the chimneys, and once more watched all the varying and magnificent phases of sunrise. Presently we should return to a land where all these Eastern effects are not. Our gorgeous sunrises and sunsets, our rainbow atmospheres, all the picturesqueness and poetry of this Oriental life, would pass beyond our every-day horizon. Under the grey skies and chilling east winds of England—satirically described in a German geography of the last century as "a small island situated near the coast of France"—in this insular home of ours we should look back upon these days as the fabric of a vision : a celestial experience. Such

a sky and sunrise as we saw that morning brought us in truth nearer heaven than earth.

We knew that Osman possessed the royal virtue of punctuality, and at ten o'clock to the minute his equipage turned the corner which brought him in sight of us. A few moments more and we were making way through the usual crowd of people and donkeys with their freights of tourists: all the wonderful contrasts presented by the streets of Cairo: the mixture of ancient and modern, of old world and new world, of Eastern and European people, manners and customs, more perceptible here than in any other city.

A few hours ago, we had rattled through the empty and deserted streets, awaking the echoes and startling the sacred cats. Now we were scarcely heard. Sights and sounds distracted the mind; but it was impossible not to be keenly interested. It is all gradually passing away. The Cairo of one's imagination, of the *Arabian Nights*, is daily giving way to European influence. More and more, the traces of the Ancient Egyptians, of the Caliphs and Mamelukes, all the wonders and individuality of the Middle Ages, are yielding to the progress of the age, the fatal *rapprochement* of all countries towards each other. Time and space are becoming mere terms.

Thus Cairo is no longer absolutely Oriental. The charm of the Saracenic atmosphere has been broken into and barbarously interrupted by a nightmare of Italian houses and modern palaces of worse than no school of architecture, by a thousand and one erections that are true Canaanites in the world of design. Nowhere was the purely Saracenic influence so predominant as in Cairo. The Byzantine and Syrian Schools are far more evident in such towns as Aleppo and Damascus. But Cairo has still sufficient to cause it to stand out above all other towns in interest.

This morning all the daily scenes and experiences were repeated. The faithful guardians had rolled up their sacking and departed; the doors stood open. The water-carriers were clinking their metal cups as an accompaniment to their hideous cries. Their curious goat-skins looked like petrified unknown animals thrown across their backs. The travelling cooks were in full force and in great demand; whilst the money-changers at the corners of the streets seemed more lynx-eyed, more eagle-clawed, than ever.

"There passes a caravan," said Osman, as we approached the Place Roumeeleh. "I wonder what part of Africa or Arabia it comes from. What are those patient, solemn-looking camels laden with? A strange life, this crossing and recrossing the desert plains. What toil the world goes through for its daily bread! Yet there must be a great charm in this slow-moving, roving life. Compare the prosiness of a journey by train with the romance of crossing the wilderness! After all, these Oriental merchants are more to be envied than their European brothers. But we are at the Mosque of Hassan. Let us compare this morning with last night's impressions."

We had passed the great doorway for the sake of looking round upon the great Roumeeleh Square. Leaving the carriage here, we retraced our steps and entered. Aleck, our dragoman, was not with us. We had given him a holiday, but to judge from his countenance the leisure meant penance to him. He was never so happy as when, under the shelter of our presence and indirect authority, he was lording it over Sheykhs and guardians, administering castigations right and left upon lazy wayfarers, riding rough-shod through stern rules and regulations, and generally making himself felt as a despotic monarch. To exchange all this reign and excitement for a mere lounge in the corridors of the hotel, or a stroll through the streets, was not happiness but misery to him. There was even a pleasure, a sense of power in administering backsheesh on our behalf; an intense gratification in hearing, but not heeding, the evidently wicked words bestowed upon him by the avaricious and extortionate recipients of his limited bounty. When not with us, he looked upon the day as lost: and misery only second to a day with his two wives.

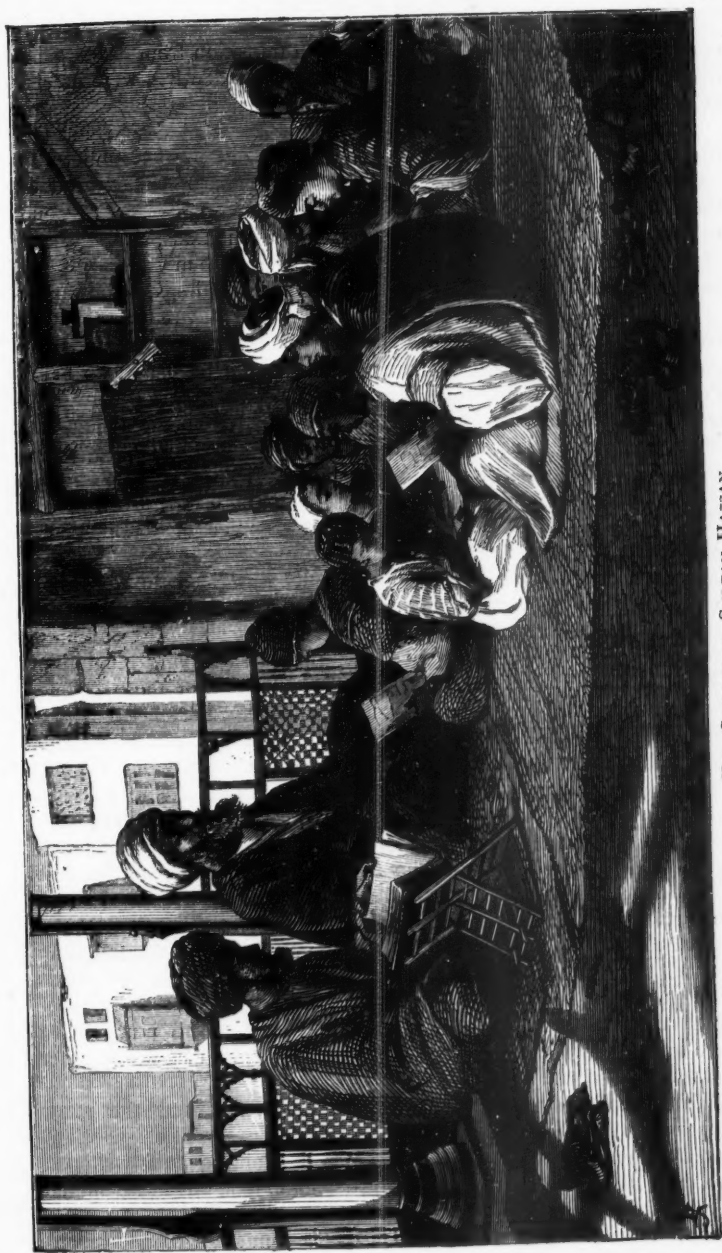
Once more we passed into the Mosque of Hassan; once more found ourselves within the small vestibule crowned with its cupolas, leading through the sombre corridor to the semicircular recess where the Sultan was wont to address the people.

The open court, a dream in the pure pale moonlight not many hours ago, was now flooded with sunshine. In the broad light of day it lost its ethereal, ghostly, thrilling aspect, but, in recompense, every detail stood out boldly defined; the wonderful beauty of the court was at once apparent. The outlines were simple but majestic; it was a combination of architecture and colouring, harmonious and singularly impressive.

Not least effective were the towering walls that seemed to seclude it from the outside world. This morning we could see that the pavement was of different coloured marbles, and that blocks of different coloured marbles formed the arches. The ruinous condition of the fountains was more evident. On the north side was a magnificent prayer-niche of exquisite beauty, which we had not examined last night. A few steps raised it above the level of the court. The exterior walls were splendidly adorned with arabesques. A horse-shoe arch, nearly seventy feet high, covered the entrance. Rich arabesques also lined the inner walls. Small lamps were suspended from the ceiling. High up, two windows rich in coloured glass threw their beautiful rays upon the interior. Nothing could be more solemn and imposing.

We passed from this flood of sunlight into the sanctuary. Torches were no longer needed, but everything was steeped in a dim religious light, yet further subdued in the Tomb Chamber beyond.

We could appreciate this morning the dimensions of the great dome, last night obscured in gloom. The bareness and dilapidations of the chamber were more marked. We noticed and admired the



THE SCHOOL OF SULTAN HASSAN.

corbelling which so cunningly effected the transition from the circular dome to the square walls ; and saw that the pendentives were indeed falling to pieces.

Above the Mihrab was a rose window of beautiful design, but the ironwork of the long open-work windows had disappeared under the hand of time. The influence of the Italian school upon the mind of the architect was very visible as we went from one part of the Mosque to another. But the building as a whole was harmonious, majestic, and characterised by that singular beauty which causes the mosques of Cairo to stand out so conspicuously amongst the great buildings of the world.

"After all," said Osman, as we stood in the centre of the open court, giving a last look around, "Mohammedanism has been a great power. In most Eastern countries it has left its traces. The False Prophet, ignorant in so many ways, at least understood the type of man for which he laid down his rules and ordinances. They are educated up to the Koran, which asks no impossibilities, imposes few restraints. Self-indulgence is no great crime with them ; self-denial and self-sacrifice are scarcely amongst the canons of their creed. They have no need to go to auricular confession or purchase indulgences. The evil of the one and the hypocrisy of the other they have kept out of their lives. Other faults they have no doubt in abundance, but they come from within, not from without. Sincerity is one of their merits, simply because great efforts and great restraints are not asked of them. I doubt if the pure, self-denying religion of Christianity could ever become the accepted religion of these people. Certainly no earthly power will effect the change. Preached amongst them it may be ; accepted by the few who have minds and souls above their fellows, and who before all things see the 'beauty of holiness.' There is no limit to the Divine Power, and the Divine will can accomplish the impossible, but nothing less can ever Christianise the East, and we do not know that it has to be done or was ever intended. It is stated in your Bible that the Gospel shall be preached amongst all nations ; it does not say that all nations are to accept it. It may be part of the Divine plan that Mohammedanism shall reign to the end of all things. Then, and then only, all the false must fall away and all the true must stand. But it is useless to exercise our minds with problems that belong to the eternal and the unseen, and of which the solution rests with a Divine Creator. And now, as we have many mosques to visit, and time tarries not, let us away to other and not less interesting scenes."

We passed off the sacred pavement and exchanged the straw slippers for our more comfortable possessions. The guardians crouched low before Osman, and accepted the coin he quietly slipped into their hand without daring to consider its weight. Had he offered them nothing, they would still have accompanied him to the outer door and dismissed him with a benediction, praying his good word with those in authority.

Within the Mosque all had been silence and solemnity ; a withdrawal from the world to a region where "all was piety and all was peace." In one moment we passed away from it all to a busy crowd, a noisy throng, a wonderful picture of Eastern life and manners, and Eastern sounds. The eye was dazzled and the ear startled. But, as we have before said, of the strange and singular interest of this wonderful scene there could be no doubt. The only living creature that seemed unaffected by its surroundings was the patient, plodding, meek-eyed, heavily-burdened camel. Even the thought of approaching rest, after a long journey through the sandy wastes of the desert, was insufficient to bring elasticity to its step or a flash to its gaze. Like the skies, it remained calm and unmoved in the midst of life's tempests and dramas.

We had soon left the Mosque of Hassan behind us ; but our present limit has been reached, and upon the principle that a guest must not wear out his welcome by too long a sojourn, we must not overtax the patience of a too lenient reader. We cannot here enter upon the charms of the other mosques that we visited that day under the guidance of our admirable friend Osman : mosques that abound in Cairo, and make it of all Eastern cities the most remarkable and the most interesting.

THE DEAD CHILDREN.

As naught had been—no sound the stillness bears,
The bells cease tolling and the chauntings die ;
And I grow calm with the relief of tears,
Since earth's last rites, at length, have all passed by.
Whilst in my dwelling still the white forms lay
I sought in vain what I, resigned, had given ;
They seemed as homeless wanderers to stray
With mournful looks between the earth and heaven.
But now 'tis over : and I sit and dream.
Oh ! there—midst leafy depths of glade and tree
So near and yet how far—the children seem
To smile as once on earth they smiled for me.
And the sun sets, and darker shadows rise,
The illusion fades—grey mists the landscape dress—
I look above—and there in distant skies
Is eve's last blush, and all my happiness !

C. E. MEETKERKE.

MR. WARRENNE:
MEDICAL PRACTITIONER.

CHAPTER XII.

ON THE SICK LIST.

LEONARD had now been six months at the office. His employers spoke well of him; his fellow-clerks respected and liked him. He could not be intimate with them, for he was made altogether of different materials. He never confided to them what he thought or felt, but he was cheerful and frank in his manners; jocosely with Mr. Mills, who loved to be jested with; and civil to those with whom he had less to do.

Whether it dawned slowly into Mr. Courtenay's head that he was of rather a better grade than the others, or not, he became gradually more scrupulous in his behaviour to him. This change first made itself known by his discovery that Leonard's name was not Cooke. He was not quite sure that he was the person referred to, when Courtenay first called him Mr. Warrenne. And this was the occasion on which it happened. He was taking a copy of a German letter which Mr. Courtenay had written to a correspondent at Hamburg, when that gentleman, coming down from one of the upstairs rooms, paused and looked to see what he was doing.

"I have made that feminine," said he, pointing with the head of his stick to an adjective in his letter; "you may as well make it masculine in the copy, Mr. Warrenne."

"I have done so," said Leonard, glancing at his copy; for he was so good a German scholar that he had written the word right by instinct. Then, after a pause, he added, shyly, "Would you like to alter the original?"

The term struck Mr. Courtenay, who, among many other peculiarities, was fastidious to excess. He thought a low person would have said *correct*, instead of *alter*.

"Oh no, thank you," he replied; and added, as he was walking away, "You know German better than I do."

Leonard naturally thought that the sky was likely to fall, after this wonderful concession; but the next day he heard that Mr. Courtenay was gone into the country for a few weeks, and Maud's letters soon gave him the information that he was staying at the Ferns. She merely mentioned that she had seen him there, but entered into no particulars respecting his visit.

He happened to be alone in the office when Mr. Courtenay did return. It need not be said that he disliked him pretty cordially, and the more so as Mr. Thomason, the head partner, was particularly courteous, and even friendly, to him in his manners.

What was his surprise when Mr. Courtenay, on walking into the room, took off his hat, set it on the table, and then, coming up to Leonard's desk, leaned his back against it, and said in an easy tone :

"How do you do, Mr. Warrenne?"

Leonard, with a slight bow, returned the salutation, concluded that Mr. Courtenay had taken something stronger than coffee that morning, and then dipped his pen.

"I had the pleasure of seeing a part of your family at Erlesmede," said Mr. Courtenay. "They were perfectly well, I am glad to tell you."

Leonard looked up at his companion, who seemed to have settled himself for a gossip, thanked him for his information, and went on writing.

"Hard at it!" said Mr. Courtenay, watching his progress.

Leonard smiled.

"You know the Creswicks, I believe?" said Courtenay.

"Yes; I have known them since my return from abroad," replied Leonard.

"Mrs. Creswick is a very old friend of mine," said Courtenay. "I find she has a niece staying with her at present."

Leonard tried to write very steadily.

"Miss Reynolds tells me that you waltz admirably," continued Courtenay.

"Miss Reynolds was making herself merry at my expense," replied Leonard, with composure.

"She spoke with great fervour, I assure you. Are you fond of dancing?"

"It is out of my way now," returned Leonard, calmly; "I liked it very well abroad."

"But I am interrupting you," said Mr. Courtenay, moving a little away.

"My time is not my own," answered Leonard, courteously, for he was never abrupt, even to those persons whom he disliked.

Mr. Courtenay took the hint, and left him; but whenever he passed through the office, he always asked him how he was, and made some trifling remark; and Leonard puzzled over this singular change of behaviour without coming to any satisfactory conclusion.

One day it chanced that Leonard, who had caught a bad cold, was coughing repeatedly as he was at his work. Mr. Courtenay, who was standing giving some directions to Mr. Mills, turned round and said:

"What an infernal cough you have got!"

Leonard, thinking that this was an ebullition of spleen, because the sound of his cough disturbed Mr. Courtenay's conversation, said nothing, but tried to control it.

Mr. Mills said in a surly tone, "Mr. Warrenne got wet through the other day, sir."

"How did that come about?" said Mr. Courtenay, addressing Leonard.

"I happened to be caught in the rain," replied Leonard.

"And you never will carry an umbrella," said Mr. Mills, who had become so fond of Leonard as to take an interest in all his proceedings.

"But I do not like an umbrella, Mr. Mills," replied Leonard.

"Young people ought not to go by what they like," returned Mr. Mills.

Leonard laughed, and Mr. Courtenay, finding that Mr. Mills had presumed to mingle in the dialogue, began to sing, and walked away.

In the course of the afternoon, as Leonard was putting up a packet of papers, Mr. Courtenay came in. The rain was pouring down as it sometimes does pour in November.

"Where are you going, eh?" said Courtenay.

"To Somerset House, with these letters," said Leonard.

"What! in this rain?" asked Courtenay.

"Certainly," replied Leonard, with a smile.

"I will leave them as I drive past," said Courtenay, quickly.

Leonard's astonishment was unbounded; but he replied that he was much obliged to Mr. Courtenay, but he could not accept his kindness.

To this remark Mr. Courtenay made answer by holding out his hand for the papers.

"You are very good," said Leonard; "but this is a part of my business. I am answerable if these letters are mislaid or forgotten. You will excuse me if I seem ungracious, but I must take them myself;" and reaching his hat, he passed Mr. Courtenay with a bow, and went out into the street.

But a long walk in the rain did not improve his cough. The next day he was almost too ill to go down to the office, and his cough was unremitting.

Mr. Mills, on the other side of the green curtain, gave him a good many recipes for bad colds, and lectures on the use of umbrellas.

"You will have to lay by," said Mr. Mills. "I am sure Mr. Thomason will give you leave. I will ask him if you like."

"Thank you," said Leonard; "do not let us be in a hurry. I shall be able to go on for some time yet; for I have an idea that when I do give in, it will be for good."

Mr. Mills swore violently at this announcement, for it affected his feelings.

Leonard coughed and wrote without interruption.

"I will tell you what," said Mr. Mills; "if you don't take such a cold as that in time, it will end in the churchyard."

"But it is a very easy death, Mr. Mills," said Leonard, reaching down a ledger.

"What is an easy death?" asked Mr. Mills, gruffly.

"Consumption," returned Leonard.

"Do you mean to say that it is in your family?"

"My mother died of it, but in her case it was not constitutional, and so we may hope not to have inherited it. But your agreeable conversation distracts me, and I have a profound calculation to make here."

Mr. Mills got up and left the office.

"I hope I have not offended the old fellow," said Leonard, half-aloud, as he continued his writing; "but it is impossible to work and talk at the same time."

"Is that your opinion?" asked Mr. Courtenay, who was standing behind him.

Leonard started a little, and then said, calmly, "I thought I was alone."

"Why, I have been here for the last five minutes," said Mr. Courtenay.

Leonard made no answer.

"I have been admiring your politeness to that curious old monster," continued Courtenay. "Why don't you cut him short?"

"I am in the same station," replied Leonard, still more coolly; "any rudeness on my part would be worse than wrong—it would be ridiculous."

Mr. Courtenay remained leaning against the desk, turning about his stick. At last he looked up and said:

"You had better let me drive you home at once."

"Thank you," said Leonard, smiling; "if I were to take myself off now, I should stand a good chance of being dismissed in the morning."

"Ah! what's the term they have for being dismissed?" asked Courtenay, as if thinking.

"I never heard it," returned Leonard; "I know very little of my companions."

"And yet you talk of being in their station," said Courtenay; "it is too good!"

Mr. Mills came back at this moment, looking very important, with the news that he had spoken to Mr. Thomason, and that Mr. Warrenne was not to return to the office until he was entirely recovered of his cough.

Leonard looked half-vexed and half-gratified. It was very good-natured of Mr. Mills to take so much interest in his welfare, but there was nothing he hated so much as any fuss made about his ailments.

"And now, perhaps, you will let me drive you home," said Courtenay, "unless you have a predilection for a natural shower-bath. Not the least trouble. It is all in my way."

Notwithstanding this consideration on the part of Mr. Courtenay, Leonard's cough was worse the next day. Like all men, he was very

nervous and impatient of illness, and the solitude of his lodging did not improve his spirits ; he was in the last stage of depression, when, to his unbounded amazement, the door of his room opened, and Mr. Courtenay walked in. He had not got over his wonder at that gentleman's condescension in driving him home, and what miracle brought him to his lodgings he was still farther from comprehending. Indeed, he was likely to assign any cause but the true one to this singular change ; he little dreamed that Maud had wrought the alteration.

Mr. Courtenay was the last person to persevere, or to cherish an attachment that was not returned. He would have made any sacrifice, any exertion to secure her regard. He had never forgotten his first brief interview with her, for some lurking bit of sentiment is not uncommonly found in those characters which disclaim it altogether ; yet as soon as he felt convinced that he could not succeed in winning her, he dismissed her image from his mind by an effort of which his character, trained and hardened by circumstances, was capable. But towards her brother he showed the same interest that he would have done had his suit to the sister been successful.

"So, you are worse," said Courtenay, taking a chair : "what have you done to get better ? Have you sent for a doctor ?"

"No," replied Leonard ; "I shall write to my father if I do not get better soon."

"You are quite right to put it off as long as you possibly can," said Courtenay, drily, "because then, either way, his advice will be perfectly useless."

Leonard, not knowing whether he spoke in jest or earnest, was silent.

"Well, I have brought you some books," continued his visitor. "German ones—I suppose you like German literature. People generally think there is something very grand in their rambling nonsense. Here is a little book called 'Moonshine' ; it will just suit you."

Leonard smiled and thanked him.

"Schiller ?" said Courtenay, looking into a volume that lay on the table. "Ah ! when you are older you will read Shakespeare. But these second-rate minds are a bad preparation. You would do well to put Schiller into the fire."

Leonard endeavoured to obtain a milder verdict for the great German. He urged his power and facility in the ballad ; the versatile character of his genius ; the stately beauty of 'Wallenstein' ; the fire and pathos of 'Don Karlos.'

"All very fine," said Courtenay, "but there are things to be had which are finer. Do you think he ever wrote so grand a ballad as 'Chevy Chase' ? Do you call 'Wallenstein' as good a tragedy as Forde's 'Perkin Walbeck' ? And as for 'Don Karlos,' the finest tragedy in the world would be ruined by the admission of such a blunderer as Von Posa."

"Von Posa!" echoed Leonard, who had always been in the habit of considering his character as the gem of the piece.

"You admire him, do you?" said Courtenay, taking up the book. "Yes, he engages our interest from the very first. He sets out in life with an act of cowardice of which every Eton schoolboy would be ashamed—throws a shuttlecock into an old woman's eye, and then allows the Prince to bear the penalty of his fault."

"But he regrets that episode in his history," said Leonard, pointing to the lines—

"O stille Prinz von diesen kindischen
Geschichten, die mich jetzt noch schamroth machen!"

"Much good that did," said Courtenay. "I hate a knave; but I think I hate him more if he is sorry for it. And then the quantity of vague philanthropic nonsense he talks to the King proves him to be an idiot of the first water!"

"Nay," said Leonard, "I cannot but think his appeal to Philip in behalf of the Netherlands, full of eloquence and moral courage, and dictated by the purest feelings of humanity."

"Well, I allow him to be a well-meaning creature in some respects," returned Courtenay, "but destitute of the faintest gleam of common-sense. Where was the use of raving about liberty of conscience to the greatest bigot that ever sat on the throne of Spain? And then, after floundering from one absurd plot to another, to be shot like a dog, because he could not help it! A fit end for a man who had not skill enough to play his own game!"

"But his aim throughout was to defend the Prince at his own expense," said Leonard.

"And, like a clumsy fellow, lost himself, and did his friend no good," returned Courtenay. "But it is a fine poem, after all. The character of Elizabeth is exquisite, and that of Karlos so highly coloured, that one speaks no treason in naming him along with Hamlet. That is a grand scene after the death of Posa: there is one passage in which he bursts upon the King with such a torrent of invective—stay—it begins——"

As Mr. Courtenay turned the leaves of the book to find the speech, there fell from it a card, on which the following names were written with a pencil:—O'Neill, De Merville, Taylor, Le Grange, Roxby.

Courtenay, thinking that it was a list of the *dramatis personæ*, glanced over it.

"Eh?" said he, handing it to Leonard.

He had never been so confounded in his life. He remembered having put down the names of the five conspirators, as he termed them, the day on which he heard them spoken of by the military cousin.

It was the most awkward thing in the world. He could not explain the circumstance; and to have written those names down at

random looked, to say the least of it, a little like insanity. After gazing on the card with an air of great vexation, he threw it angrily into the fire.

Mr. Courtenay remained contemplating him in silence for a minute with a quiet smile, and then said :

"You became very intimate, of course, with Miss Reynolds when you were at Erlesmede?"

"I saw her occasionally," said Leonard; "my sister is very well acquainted with her aunt. I could not help meeting her sometimes."

"Ah! that was unpleasant!" said Courtenay, in a tone of sympathy.

"Not at all," replied Leonard, trying to appear quite unconcerned; "they were very pleasant people at the Ferns."

"I am glad you seem to have no particular views in that quarter," said Courtenay, ironically. "You had better leave her to O'Neill, or any one of them—they will be perfectly well-matched, depend upon it."

"As for views," returned Leonard, "it is impossible that I could entertain any with regard to a person so much above me in point of fortune and position; but I have a great respect for her, and for Mrs. Creswick, and I confess that it would be the happiest day of my life in which I could put a bullet through any one of those villains who engaged in such a detestable act of treachery!"

Mr. Courtenay looked vastly amused by the vehemence with which his companion proclaimed his wishes. "Mrs. Creswick, I am sure, would feel the compliment very keenly," he said, with a provoking smile. "By the way, I think it was with Miss Reynolds with whom you used to waltz?"

"Certainly not with Mrs. Creswick," said Leonard, smiling at the very idea of waltzing with that lady. "And I have not danced with Miss Reynolds more than two or three times, and then quite by accident, when there were a few people to dinner, and they got up a waltz in the evening."

"I left Mr. Mills mourning your absence and informing everybody that he didn't know what he should do without you," said Courtenay, as he rose to go.

"I shall not leave him to mourn long," replied Leonard. "I hope to be at my work in a day or two."

"Why, you don't like it, I am sure," said Courtenay.

"I like still less that other people should do my business," returned Leonard.

"You need not be ceremonious, you know, with such a fellow as old Mills," said Mr. Courtenay.

"Nor he with me," returned Leonard; "we are fellow-servants."

"Now, that's all pride, putting yourself on a level with him," said Mr. Courtenay.

"I spoke only of my station, which is palpable enough; I said nothing of *myself*," answered Leonard.

He looked so like Maud as he spoke.

"Bravo!" said Mr. Courtenay, shaking hands with him; "take care of yourself till I see you again. It's plain you want somebody to look after you."

For several days Mr. Courtenay visited Leonard regularly. He brought him books and magazines, and remained for some time conversing with him, as if desirous to lighten the tedium of his illness. He never again alluded to the unfortunate card, much to the relief of Leonard, who could ill bear his calm, ironical manner on the subject.

Once, having found him arranging some flowers in a glass, Mr. Courtenay brought him a large cluster of white violets, which, he said, came from Mr. Thomason's, where they grew them, and asked him carelessly if Miss Reynolds was fond of flowers. Leonard did not know; and Courtenay said that possibly, like the French lady, she was not much addicted to harmless pleasures.

In their literary discussions, Courtenay seemed to take a pleasure in mystifying him, and advancing the strangest opinions, just to hear what he would say; and Leonard observed that he always took the most matter-of-fact view possible of every subject, and that he laughed unmercifully at the colouring of romance, with which Leonard was apt to invest any topic that pleased his fancy. He even, as they grew more intimate, frequently applied to him the name of the German book that he had lent him—"Moonshine."

But finding in a few days that he grew rather worse than better, Courtenay insisted on his going down to Erlesmede, to put himself under his father's care, and backed his advice by a message from Mr. Thomason, to the effect that he was at liberty to absent himself from the office for a few weeks in order to re-establish his health.

To Leonard this permission was like a respite from death. He had a fanciful presentiment that he should not recover in London, and that the air of Erlesmede would work his immediate cure. He wrote home instantly to apprise his family of his coming, and followed his letter down without delay.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE STORM.

"LEONARD, my dear boy," said Mr. Warrenne, a few days after his son's arrival, "I shall not ride to-day; the white horse is at your service if you have a mind to go out, and it will be better for you than walking."

Leonard accepted with much pleasure.

The horse was ordered out, and he set off on a ramble across the country. It was a sort of day that Leonard particularly liked at that season of the year; dull, dark, and rather misty, with now and then a storm of wind. The night had been very boisterous, and as he rode

down the lane, a number of broken branches strewed about gave earnest of the violence of the storm. The air was not at all cold ; and the wind coming from the south-west, had nothing chilling in its breath ; and Leonard rode on, very like a philosopher, without caring where he went, or how far he should have to go back again. About five miles from Erlesmede there was a wide, desolate common, on the other side of which stood a broad belt of tall, spreading trees, through which the road passed. This was always a bleak, solitary part of the country, and many a tale of footpads and highway robbers was connected with the common and thicket : indeed, one particular angle of the road was called by the country people "Dead Man's Corner," in commemoration of a horrid murder, which it is needless to detail, committed on a poor man, who was buried by his assassin on the spot, and not discovered until many years after.

In crossing this common the wind rose rapidly, and with such fury, that Leonard seemed in some danger of being blown off his horse. He had half a mind to turn back, but seeing in front of him a low carriage, in which was a lady, driven by a man, he thought that if she could brave the weather, it could hardly be bad enough to check his progress. The carriage was just entering into the thicket, and might have been about a hundred yards in advance of him, when suddenly the wind swept as if in a circle : a large tree was uprooted by the roots, and fell steadily forward upon the travellers.

A sharp cry seemed to mingle with the roar of the wind and the crash of the enormous branches of the tree. Leonard reined up for a moment, completely paralysed, so sudden and yet so quiet was the work of destruction, then dashed forward to see if any assistance could yet avail the sufferers. The trunk had fallen so as to crush down one side of the low pony carriage, with the man who had been driving ; the horse killed and forced down on one knee, in a strange position, with his head turned back ; but the lady, by some capricious growth of the branches on that side of the tree, was providentially saved from death, or even, it seemed, from any serious injury.

But she was almost insensible from terror, and she neither replied to Leonard's anxious inquiries, nor seemed to hear what he said to her. She was leaning back in the carriage with her eyes wide open and directed forward ; but it was evident that "their sense was shut." He felt in a complete dilemma. In the first place, an intricate screen of boughs intervened between him and the unfortunate lady ; in the next place, he did not know what to make of her condition. She was not exactly in a swoon, nor yet in her senses ; and then, again, it was possible that the unhappy man, crushed so horribly at her side, might be her husband : if so, how dreadful would be her return to consciousness.

Most gladly did he welcome the approach of a couple of woodmen, who, with axe in hand, were returning from their work. Under his direction, they cleared the branches around the lady, sufficiently to

admit of his withdrawing her from the carriage, and leading her to some distance among the trees.

After supporting her onwards for a few moments, she shuddered violently, and said indistinctly several times, "Oh, horrible!" Then, attempting to turn back, she exclaimed:

"But where is Adams? I am sure he must be terribly hurt."

"I entreat you, madam," said Leonard, holding her back; "I cannot suffer you to see him—nothing you can do will avail him—his sufferings are over."

She covered her eyes with her hands for a moment, and then suddenly looking up, exclaimed, as she pressed forward:

"We are not yet sure that nothing can be done—he may be only stunned—he is a very old servant," she added. "I shall be distressed, indeed, to lose him!"

Leonard again interposed. He knew well enough that life must be extinct; he assured her that the spectacle was appalling to himself, and quite unfit for her to witness.

The lady seemed greatly agitated, and, after a short silence, she said, in a voice so low that he could hardly catch the words:

"And to whom am I indebted for so much kindness?"

"My name is Warrenne, madam," said Leonard; "and I beg you to believe that anything I can do farther to assist you will give me much satisfaction."

"Warrenne?" exclaimed the lady, turning her eyes for the first time upon him. "Singular!"

There was a pause, during which Leonard surveyed, in his turn, the lady whom he was escorting. Every trace of youth, and of the beauty which is dependent on youth, had long left her countenance; but there remained a delightful regularity of feature, a sweetness in the dark eyes, a serenity on the brow, a repose that was intellectual, not physical, in the expression, which with some persons would make amends for the graces of which time had robbed her.

"I think I must trespass on you so far, as to beg that you will conduct me home. I believe my house is the nearest place to this," said the lady feebly; "we must send for workmen to remove this poor man. Thank God, he has no wife or family; but how to reach my house?"

"It is but an unpleasant mode of conveyance," said Leonard; "but my horse is very quiet, and if I lead him, you need not be under the least apprehension."

The lady consented immediately to this plan, and Leonard, having brought up his horse, lifted her on it, and, half supporting her on the saddle, walked by her side. They went on in silence, except from time to time, when they came to a turning, he asked her which road he was to follow. At last, after about three miles, which appeared to Leonard almost interminable, they came to a long line of plantations, after which the lady directed him to open a massive gate in a stone

archway, which led them through a thick deep wood, by a winding path, to the carved porch of a Gothic building. The man-servant who opened the hall-door looked greatly astonished to see his lady return in such a manner, and said respectfully, as she entered leaning on Leonard's arm, that he feared there had been some accident.

"An awful one!" she replied, and passed in.

As soon as she reached the drawing-room she sank into a low chair, and, after making some ineffectual attempts to speak, fainted away.

It was not absolutely necessary for a woman to be young and pretty to excite Leonard's sympathy and interest, but this was a case in which he could do nothing beyond ringing the bell and consigning her to the care of her maid; and then, feeling that he had been absent an unconscionable time, and that those at home would be anxious for his return, and not thinking it at all necessary to remain to receive the lady's thanks for his services, he went out into the hall and asked for his horse. The quiet grey-haired servant who answered his application, detained him a few moments to ask an account of the adventure, which Leonard gave, to his infinite horror and surprise, and he learned, in his turn, that the name of the lady he had assisted was Mrs. Digby, and the poor man who was killed was her steward. He had driven his lady to some almshouses on the other side of her estate, and was returning when the fatal accident occurred.

"It was, then, Mrs. Digby whom I met so strangely," said Leonard, on hearing her name.

"Mrs. Digby of Forrel Court," said the quiet servant, with a slight increase of importance in his manner.

Leonard looked up at the old scutcheon in front of the ancient porch, with the idea that he either knew or ought to know something of the person bearing that name, but the chevron guilds and the eagles' heads in chief did not appear to enlighten him, and, returning the courteous salutation of the old man, he rode slowly off.

He had not overrated the anxiety which his sisters would be feeling at his absence. When he returned, they were waiting in the most painful uncertainty; and Mr. Scudamore, who had dropped in to drink tea, as he did about every other night, was promising Maud that he would set out to look for him in another ten minutes. Even Mr. Warrenne was walking up and down the room; a sure sign with him of being thoroughly uncomfortable.

His narrative was eagerly listened to by the whole party. Maud thought it an adventure; Mr. Scudamore proclaimed it a coincidence; Mr. Warrenne said nothing, but sighed deeply once or twice; and Alice, drawing nearer to him, whispered:

"The grandfather told us, papa, that Mrs. Digby was in love with you a great many years ago."

"He made a little mistake, my dear," said Mr. Warrenne quietly; and Alice asked no more questions.

While they were at tea, Dinah entered with a note for Mr. Warrenne; a few lines from Mrs. Digby—she had assumed the matronly prefix with advancing years—begging him to visit her immediately, and stating that her carriage should fetch him and bring him back.

"How very odd!" said Maud, when her father was gone; "Mrs. Digby has never had papa before."

"Then you may depend on it she was never ill," said Mr. Scudamore.

"Not ill for thirty years! What a fortunate person!" said Maud. "But I shall regret Leonard's share in the adventure if it increases his cough."

"I am quite well," said Leonard; "I began to mend directly I got out of London. Courtenay said that I should."

"It seems so strange to hear you speak familiarly of that horrid person," said Maud, smiling.

"If it had not been for him, I should not have come down at all," said Leonard. "I told you his manner was quite altered."

"I cannot understand it," said Alice.

Maud turned away her head.

"Hollo! Somebody else wanting your father," said Mr. Scudamore, as the gate bell rang violently.

"Papa will be quite *répandu* if this goes on!" cried Maud, rising. "Come, Alice, let us give the grandfather a duet."

She had not finished speaking, when the door flew open, and Mrs. Thorne, all splashed and out of breath, hurried into the room.

"Oh, you are a pretty father!" said she, going straight up to her astonished brother—"a very pretty father on my word; to be out drinking tea when your son is come home—in a post-chaise and four, straight from Hastings; the ship went to pieces not five hours ago,—the hurricane, you know,—tore up three trees in the cowslip meadow, and a mercy he was saved at all, seeing he was so lame. And how are you getting on, Master Leonard?"

"What! Dick come home?" said Scudamore, starting up, and laughing to conceal his emotion; "and shipwrecked too—ha! ha! Then, Queen Maud, I am off. I shall bring him here as soon as possible, you may depend, just to hear your opinion of him."

Mr. Scudamore was outside the door in an instant; but Mrs. Thorne lingered a moment behind to say:

"He's very handsome, if he was not so yellow; but, as I said to Louisa, beauty has nothing at all to do with it—not that I ever thought Thompson so ugly as they all did—he would have been drowned if a gentleman had not helped him into a boat—three trees in the cowslip meadow—but he is in a hurry. Good-night!"

CHAPTER XIV.

DIVIDED INTERESTS.

It will easily be believed that the village had enough to talk about for some time to come. The wonderful escape of Mrs. Digby went through a great variety of editions; but everybody seemed to agree that Leonard Warrenne had some share in the adventure. This was remarkably near the truth, for a village narrative. Of course a good many people stoutly maintained that it was Leonard who had been crushed by the tree, and benevolently carried by Mrs. Digby to her house, where he was now lying, slowly recovering from his accident, under her careful nursing. For it is a very common practice in rural districts to retain a slight outline of the particulars in any little affair of this kind, and to reverse the parts which the people concerned in it have played. Leonard's appearance at church, on the following Sunday, tendered rather to contradict the prevailing opinions, particularly as he bore no traces of having been a victim.

It was rather a pity that Captain Scudamore, who had for the last few days divided with Leonard the curiosity of the gossip of the village, was unable to show himself at church on the same day. A man who had just been shipwrecked, and saved from drowning by the exertions of Sir Frederic Manning, a gentleman whose eccentricities were the talk of the county, would have been equally exposed to the scrutiny of the congregation. But the injury he had received in his knee had been so aggravated by the hurry and exertion of escaping from the wreck, that he was for the present a close prisoner to his room, and threatened by Mr. Warrenne with *tic-douloureux* if he infringed his directions. Leonard, therefore, had the attention of the parish all to himself. One would think they had never seen a young man of twenty before! He could not turn his head or raise his eyes without finding fifty inquiring looks fastened upon his face. Miss Reynolds alone seemed not to share in the general curiosity. Mrs. Creswick gave him a nod and a kindly smile; and the little Colonel paused to whisper to him, over the pew door, that he was "quite a hero." But Florence, after a quick sudden glance, and a slight increase of colour as she passed him, swept on in her black velvet bonnet and crimson cachemire, determined to look haughty and indifferent.

The service proceeded; and Mr. Ranger, in that calm and sonorous voice that charmed even his *un-friends* to attention, gave out, after the names of one or two sick persons who begged for the prayers of the congregation, that "Richard Scudamore desired to return thanks to Almighty God for his late escape from shipwreck."

Alice felt the colour rise to her cheeks, and the tears to her eyes; she could hardly explain to herself why she was thus affected; but she could not get those few words out of her head during the whole service.

"I was so pleased," she said, reverting with a little hesitation to

the circumstance as she was walking home with her sister ; " I felt glad, Maud, for your sake."

" For my sake," exclaimed Maud ; " dear Alice, pray be glad for the young man. It is a good thing to find that he has a little decency ; but pray don't jumble him and me together in your head ! Leonard, do make haste ; there is Mrs. Creswick loitering at the gate on purpose to speak to you."

" I won't keep you back, then," said Leonard ; " but I am going with Mr. Scudamore to the Woodlands to be introduced to his son."

" Oh, then run, dear !" cried Maud ; " such a treasure as Dick ought not to be kept waiting for his dinner or his luncheon, or whatever he has at this time of day. My love to the grandfather ; and tell Mrs. Thorne that if her patience wears thin, she had better hand Dick over to Jack Robins, and come and stay with me till he gets well again."

Mrs. Creswick *was* lingering by the churchyard gate to see Leonard. She had always liked him very much ; and she had been rather surprised to find that he had been at home some days without calling upon her. It crossed her mind at first that there might be some coolness between Leonard and her niece ; for she was well aware that Florence exercised her power and her caprice upon all who approached her ; and she had sometimes thought with anxiety that his countenance betrayed more interest than was quite within the limits of acquaintanceship ; but upon mentioning carelessly one morning to Florence that she had half expected young Warrenne to have paid them a visit, it did not quite appear that Florence remembered who he was, and when she was made to understand that her aunt was speaking of Mr. Warrenne's son, her manner expressed such total indifference as to whether he came or stayed away, that Mrs. Creswick hoped and concluded she was mistaken in her inference. She did not know how often Florence had loitered about the garden and paced the laurel walk in the hope that Leonard might be coming to see her ; how often she had thought over their last scene with bitter vexation at the part she had played, how she had wondered at herself when all was over, how she had resolved that her future manner should be all kindness, all consideration, when they met ; not that she could ever marry a young man with his prospects, but that, she reluctantly confessed to herself, she loved him. It seemed as if the ideal and romantic picture of friendship which Leonard had wished to establish between them had been transferred into her mind ; she fancied that it would be delightful to promote his interests, to be his confidant, to receive his homage, and to reign over his heart, without surrendering her own. But when day after day passed without his calling, she felt that her power had passed away ; she tried to become careless, and assumed an indifference that was hardly natural towards an intimate acquaintance, in order to conceal from all eyes the keenness of her mortification.

"I was just waiting to speak to my old friend Leonard," said Mrs. Creswick, as Maud came up; "has he been ill or busy that we have never seen him?"

"He has been ill, my dear Mrs. Creswick," replied Maud, "and the first day he ventured out he met with an adventure that brought back his cough—to-day is only his second appearance."

"And how has he vanished now?" said Mrs. Creswick; "I saw him come out of church with you."

"Mr. Scudamore carried him off to see his son," replied Maud.

"Perhaps you can give us the true version of this affair of your brother's," said Florence, turning coldly to Maud. "Had he anything to do with saving Captain Scudamore?"

"Nothing at all," replied Maud, with equal coolness.

"Oh, no; it was Sir Frederic Manning!" exclaimed Alice.

Mrs. Creswick smiled; Florence coloured angrily.

"Oh, Sir Frederic is the hero, instead of your brother!" said Florence.

"Just so," returned Maud.

"You never go to balls, I think," remarked Florence, as they walked on.

"Never," replied Maud.

"Perhaps you do not dance?"

"I have learned," replied Maud quietly.

"Sir Frederic's name puts me in mind of the R—— ball," said Florence; "he came in shooting-jacket, never danced, and behaved so very oddly!"

"I am almost afraid that young man drinks," said Mrs. Creswick.

"My dear aunt," cried Florence, laughing, "you are 'almost afraid' of a fact that the whole county has recognised ever since I can remember."

"I did not know," Alice began, but she did not venture to conclude her protest against the formidable Miss Reynolds.

"Alice is going to tell us something that we shall all be glad to hear, in favour of Sir Frederic," remarked Mrs. Creswick.

"I can tell you plenty in his favour, my dear Mrs. Creswick," said Maud, who felt the tremulous pressure of her sister's hand on her arm, and who cared nothing for the half-shut eyes of Miss Reynolds. "Papa often says, that he nowhere sees such active kindness as that of Sir Frederic to his tenants. When he hears of any case of distress or illness, he never rests until he has done all in his power to alleviate it. And his conduct at the wreck was really very daring, for the sea was so rough that nobody would venture to save the passengers, until he led the way."

"I think nothing of these adventures," said Florence; "every gentleman is supposed to be brave. Besides, that proves nothing against his drinking."

As she spoke, a horseman, riding at the most reckless speed, passed

them; leaped a gate at a little distance down the road, and continued his way at the same rate across the fields.

"There goes your hero," observed Florence, turning scornfully towards Maud. "I hope you have something to say for his morality, in scouring the country after that fashion, instead of going to church! And pray add courtesy to his catalogue of virtues, in dashing past ladies and splashing them with mud as he passes. I pity your velvet cloak, my dear aunt."

"A mere trifle," said Mrs. Creswick, shaking from her mantle a few drops which had been flung up by the horse's hoofs. "And now that we have done with Sir Frederic, let me hear all about Leonard, my dear Maud."

While Maud was giving Mrs. Creswick an account of her brother, Florence, wrapping her boa closer round her throat, walked briskly forward, as if she felt the cold; and then lingering at the iron gate of the Ferns, waited for her aunt to come up to her.

"And the rest I think I will hear from himself," were the concluding words of Mrs. Creswick, as she joined her niece; "bring him with you, my dear, to-morrow."

"I wish I could," said Maud to Alice, as they went in at their own garden-gate; "but you know that nothing will induce him to come with me to the Ferns."

"I quite agree with him," returned Alice quietly; "Miss Reynolds is a great deal too much to encounter."

Leonard returned from the Woodlands very much pleased with his visit. Captain Scudamore had been so friendly, and had appeared so much obliged by his sitting with him for a couple of hours, that he felt much gratified.

"For it really is something unusual," he remarked to Maud, "for a gentleman to take any notice whatever of a person in my station."

Any allusion to the inferiority of his position always nettled Maud, and it was partly on this account that he started the subject.

"Your station," she exclaimed, with flashing eyes; "is there any possible occupation that could wash the old blood out of your veins? If you were to sweep the street, could that prevent you from being descended from the favourite of Charlemagne?"

"Do you know, Maud, my dear," returned Leonard, "that in the old time, any member of the noblesse who meddled with commerce, forfeited, thenceforward, all the advantages of his birth? That is the way they managed things in France. And very right, too, for nothing is more opposed to the enlightened and graceful spirit of chivalry than the habits and principles of every kind of traffic."

"You are so prejudiced on that subject," returned Maud.

"Yes; they were wise in those old times," said Leonard, warming as he went on: "the vassal, the agricultural labourer, who followed his lord to the field, might stand a chance of attracting the attention of his monarch by his services, and of passing, by the consecration

of knighthood, into the noble class ; but no circumstance, no amount of wealth, could ever enable a trader to emerge from the condition in which he was born. His privileges were secured to his order ; but no successful speculation, no greedy profusion of gold, could ever obtain for him an admission into the charmed circle of the aristocracy. Honour was in those days rendered to the sword and the lyre ; but never to the sensual abundance, which, if it be but excessive enough, will now entitle a man to aspire to the highest society in the country."

"Well ; now I could say a great deal for the merchant princes of Genoa and Venice," said Maud ; "but as dinner is on the table, Master Leonard, I will rather try how I can cut up this fowl."

Maud asked no particular questions respecting Leonard's visit to the Woodlands during dinner. Mr. Warrenne disliked every species of gossip, and never indulged in details himself. He always wondered what it could signify to her, if Maud asked what such a person wore, or who such a person was going to marry. Now Maud, like a "very woman," was fond of these trifling particulars ; but then, like a "very woman," she was wiser than to bore her father about them.

But, after dinner, when Mr. Warrenne was dozing in his easy-chair, and Maud and her sister had drawn close to the fire, while Leonard, lounging on the sofa, was peeling walnuts for Alice, her catechism began.

"Let me see—the grandfather dines between the services, on Sunday, does he not ?" said Maud.

"He does. I took luncheon at the same time," replied Leonard.

"Does Mrs. Thorne trot about the room during dinner ?" asked Maud ; "she always does at luncheon ; but I have never happened to dine there."

"No ; but she talks all the time to Jack Robins, who stands behind her chair, about the crops and the poultry, and the neighbours. She says she cannot endure being waited on by regular servants. She calls them coxcombs. Mr. Scudamore's man never ventures to hand her a dish."

"How she would rejoice in Karl !" said Alice, laughing. "I am sure nobody could accuse him of being a regular servant."

"Yes ; she says we are very fortunate in Karl ; but, I tell you, there is one thing she would miss dreadfully—Karl could never bring her all the scandal of the village, as Jack Robins does."

"True ; that would be a great loss," said Maud ; "but, now let us approach our great subject. Alice is longing to hear a full, true, and particular account of Dick !"

"Oh, Maud !" interposed Alice.

"I am sure Alice has no curiosity about him," said Leonard ; "but I knew you would never rest long without making inquiries. Oh, he is a very nice fellow ! I like his manners—he stops in his room, at present."

"There is a man's description ; go on," said Maud.

"Oh, I don't know; he is very handsome, I think; he is rather like Mr. Scudamore, and he has a small hand. I thought of you, and your aversion to large-handed people!"

"A small hand! That is a decided virtue," said Maud.

"Papa has small hands," said Alice.

"But Miss Reynolds has not," added Maud.

"But such a splendid hand!" exclaimed Leonard; "so white, and beautifully formed!"

"Splendid! On the same principle that nurses persist in calling every broad, stout baby a *fine* child!"

"Oh, Maud! Jealous!" exclaimed Leonard.

"Yes; I have cause," retorted Maud, glancing down on her own slender fingers.

"Ah! that reminds me that he has never called on Mrs. Creswick," said Alice.

"True; he must go to-morrow," said Maud.

"Indeed I cannot; I am engaged to dine at the Woodlands," replied Leonard.

"They dine late on weekdays," said Maud.

"Ay; but I go early," returned Leonard.

"I told you so," said Alice, significantly.

"What did your wisdom tell her?" said Leonard, presenting Alice with the walnut he had peeled.

"That you were afraid of Miss Reynolds," replied Alice.

"Oh, that's absurd! I will go any day that I have time," said Leonard, hastily.

"But we have not done with Dick, yet," returned Maud. "What did you talk about?"

"We talked about Alberic. He gave me a description of Alberic's camel—he keeps a riding camel—and we talked about the field-sports of India. He made me long to go there."

"Long; I should think so!" exclaimed Alice. "What would I give to find myself there, but for a day!"

"Fancy, 'a day in the East'!" said Leonard, laughing.

"Well; and what else did you talk about?" asked Maud.

"I hardly know. He asked me lots of questions, and he seemed in very good spirits; he jested with Mrs. Thorne about everything, and stuck a long peacock's feather in her old bonnet, and then begged she would go and show herself to Jack Robins."

"Was she angry?" asked Alice.

"No; she was highly delighted."

"Is it not odd she never goes to church?" asked Maud.

"There; you cannot keep to your subject, though you are so curious," said Leonard; "now I will not answer you a single question more about Dick."

"Oh! one question, Leonard," said Alice, earnestly. "I have been longing to ask you just one thing."

"I said nothing about *you*," replied Leonard; "perhaps I may answer *your* question."

"Did not Captain Scudamore ask you a great deal about Maud?"

"No, as it happened, he did not," said Leonard; "he was very inquisitive about my youngest sister; he seemed to have heard a great deal about your playing, Alice."

Alice's soft face was suffused with blushes. Maud looked a little surprised, but not at all vexed.

"And now," said she, "let us hear what the grandfather gave you for dinner?"

"My dear Maud," said Mr. Warrenne, waking up and joining in the conversation, "what can that possibly matter to any of us?"

CHAPTER XV.

MRS. DIGBY OF FORREL COURT.

MR. WARRENNE'S time was now pretty much taken up between Mrs. Digby and Captain Scudamore. Mrs. Digby's health was terribly shaken by the fright she had experienced, but in a few days she persuaded Mr. Warrenne that she was sufficiently recovered to see Leonard, with whom she expressed herself very anxious to become acquainted.

Leonard could give his sisters but little account of his first visit to Mrs. Digby. He stayed only a short time—was quite confused by her expressions of gratitude, brief and graceful though they were—admired her black velvet dress, and the beautiful hands, whose pearly whiteness was still untouched by the destroying finger of time; and was quite enchanted by the sweetness of her manners. She pressed him to come the next day that he might go over her conservatories; and the day after that, that he might take home a particular flower for his father, which was to have blown by that time, but did not, and involved two or three more visits.

He soon became so intimate with Mrs. Digby, that he found himself talking to her with the openness of an old acquaintance; and she appeared to interest herself in his plans and ideas, and to draw from him his favourite pursuits and studies.

"You must come and see my garden in the summer," she said one day, observing the glances of admiration he cast from the window upon the smooth lawns and broad terraces; "it is not quite devoid of beauty at this season, but Palmer and I are very proud of it about June."

"I should be delighted," said Leonard; "but I return to London in a fortnight, and during the summer I must be contented with a less attractive prospect."

"I have an idea that you do not find the gaieties of London compensate for the pleasures of the country," remarked Mrs. Digby.

"Why, madam," said Leonard, frankly, "I have neither time nor means to share in its gaieties ; and to be plain with you, my situation does not allow me access to the kind of society which alone would content me. I see nothing of London but its worst streets, and a bit of the Thames, if I have a mind to look out of the office window."

"And you do not like your employment, I am afraid," said Mrs. Digby.

"No farther than as it enables me to be independent," returned Leonard ; "but that is a great comfort. I could not endure at my age to be a burden to my father."

"Perhaps you would rather have followed your father's profession," said Mrs. Digby.

"By no means, madam," replied Leonard. "I don't think there is in the world a more ill-paid servant to the public than a medical man ; ill-paid, not only in money, but also in gratitude and consideration."

"It has always appeared to me," said Mrs. Digby, "that there are some occupations which in themselves tend to advance and elevate the character. The profession of a clergyman, for instance, speaks for itself ; it is a devotion of all a man's energies to the highest good of his fellow-creatures ; it is the closest imitation of the life of Christ that is known to us on earth. And a medical man who habitually gives his skill and his labour to the poor, as so many do, without the slightest chance of remuneration, often without even the recompense of thanks, is fulfilling one of the divinest laws of our religion. In fact, wherever self is forgotten, Mr. Leonard, the pursuit is ennobled ; and those who make gain, which is the tribute money to self, the first object of their lives, depart the farthest from the Divine example."

"I believe," said Leonard, "that a medical man enjoys as much of that satisfaction which arises from disinterested labour as any one ; but I can speak confidently of the great variety of annoyances to which he is exposed. As to the impertinence and ingratitude of poor people, it can never be a cause of serious vexation to a gentleman. It is all you can expect of them. But the caprice of a higher class of patients is more important, because its consequences are more injurious. The reasons for which an honest and experienced medical man is often dismissed from a family, would appear perfectly impossible to you, unless you were behind the scenes."

"I have never taken that view of the case," replied Mrs. Digby ; "for I should not dream of changing a medical adviser, unless something very serious could be urged, either against his talents or his character."

"People would hesitate about withdrawing from a tradesman who served them well with bread or candles," said Leonard. "They would hardly consider themselves justified in injuring his credit by such a mark of disapproval. But the slightest whim justifies people in casting off a medical adviser ; where the injury is inconceivably greater to his circumstances. For anything of popularity hangs by a

thread ; and, unfortunately, his subsistence is dependent upon popular opinion. I often think that my father, if he had but been a smooth knave (for roguery in these days must either be very smooth or very rough), would have amassed a large fortune by this time."

"Instead of which he has laid up for himself the grateful prayers of the poor, and the love and respect of the rich," said Mrs. Digby.

"No, no, madam ; these are the rewards of the story-books," said Leonard, laughing ; "there are very few people, rich or poor, who either think or speak well of an honest man. He is an animal entirely above their comprehension. But my father has two or three staunch friends, who think that (like the king) he can do no wrong ; and, 'faith, that is as much as any one can expect on this side the grave."

"You take rather a sad view of life for so young a man," said Mrs. Digby ; "I wonder what it arises from. If our acquaintance were less recent I should be tempted to ask, quite generally, whether some little impediment to the course of true love is not the most likely way 'to puddle a clear spirit'?"

She smiled, without looking up, as she went on filling her netting-needle.

Leonard, relieved at not meeting her eye, coloured deeply, but disclaimed the inference ; he was not so happy, he said, as to have even an unfortunate attachment.

"But do you know, I am rather sorry to hear that," said Mrs. Digby ; "I owe you much obligation—and to your father still more—and I pleased myself with the idea that your happiness might be impeded by obstacles of a nature that I could remove."

"Indeed, madam," said Leonard, "your kindness to me is such that I owe you a more candid reply than the one I gave you. I *was* so deeply attached to a young lady in this neighbourhood, that I should have thought any sacrifice or suffering on my part cheaply encountered if it contributed in the least degree to her happiness ; but I found that she did not comprehend me at all, and I gave up the idea, so flattering to one's vanity, of being understood."

"And shall I intrude too much upon your confidence if I ask you the name of this young lady?" asked Mrs. Digby.

"It was Miss Reynolds," replied Leonard.

"I could have guessed it, from the character she bears in the neighbourhood," said Mrs. Digby, drawing together her slender brows. "You have had a very fortunate escape. Had you been richer, you might not have found out till too late the heart she has now exposed to you. I hope," she continued, with an earnestness that rather surprised Leonard, "that if your fortunes should hereafter change, you will never be so mad as to seek her again?"

"My fortune, or rather my want of it," said Leonard, smiling, "is so definite that I shall not have the temptation, and it is generally understood that Miss Reynolds is now engaged to an officer, who is at present with his regiment."

"I rejoice to hear it," replied Mrs. Digby, "for you must be very unlike the generality of young men, Mr. Leonard, if you could resist the overtures of a practised coquette."

"I confess it," said Leonard, laughing; "but she would as soon make overtures to her footman, as to a man in my position. In resigning all thoughts of her, therefore, I do not put my philosophy to any severe trial."

"Well," said Mrs. Digby, after a pause, "you have given me your confidence, Mr. Leonard, and I am disposed, in return, to give you mine."

Leonard looked up with an expression of interest.

"If I did not consider you a very singular young man," said she with a smile, "I should not imagine that the history of a woman fifty years of age, even though your own father played a conspicuous part in it, would interest you for a single moment; I count on your attention, as a matter of course."

Leonard eagerly expressed a hope that she would continue; and very tranquilly, and working while she spoke, she went on with her narrative.

"You may have heard—at least it was all over the country before your time," pursued Mrs. Digby, "that my father left me his property under a condition so peculiar, that I was strongly urged to endeavour to set it aside. This I could under no circumstances have been induced to do. The idea of enjoying property except on the exact terms of the testator, would have been in my eyes a kind of sacrilege. This estate was bequeathed to me, provided I remained unmarried. If I married, it was to go to some distant connexion, for relations I had none. I now comprehend his motives for this singular proviso; I was left with somewhere about eight thousand a year, Mr. Leonard. My father had no great idea of the happiness of the married state, no trust in the disinterested conduct of men in general. He believed, and I agree with him, that if I loved any man well enough to resign my fortune in his favour, that love would in itself be a compensation and a reward; and that the man who would take me penniless, would be more likely to render me happy than one who might be tempted by my wealth to offer me his hand. I feel that in this arrangement he provided for my peace of mind, with a judgment far beyond what I myself possessed. For I was of a disposition that more than commonly demanded an exclusive and profound devotion, such as is not very usually accorded by your sex."

Leonard here made a movement as if he wished to justify all mankind, but he probably thought better of it, and again composed himself to listen.

"When the contents of this will were made known to me," pursued Mrs. Digby, "they occasioned me not one moment's anxiety or regret. I was blindly attached, and I believed engaged, to a gentleman a few

years older than myself; when I say I believed myself engaged, I mean that afterwards, upon recalling to mind every word that had passed between us, I found reason to acquit him of being actually bound to me. However, I took it for granted, as the whole neighbourhood did, that we were solemnly engaged. I did not regret that I could not offer him, as I had once hoped to do, the fortune I meant to resign. I felt so much satisfaction in the idea of abandoning it for him, that I fancied he would feel equal pleasure in the sacrifice. I looked upon it as an earnest, which few people are so happy as to be enabled to offer before marriage, of the sincerity and depth of our love. I should have thought it the wildest injustice had I suspected that he would hesitate for a moment in his implied engagement to me. I knew his prospects would secure present comfort and future wealth whenever he should marry; and I tranquilly awaited his arrival as soon as he could with propriety present himself after my affliction. In the meantime he set sail for India, without a word to me of explanation or farewell. I assure you, Mr. Leonard, that though I can now speak of it so calmly, it cost me then more agony than I care to look back upon."

"But this was not my father?" exclaimed Leonard, shocked at the idea of such baseness, and for the moment overlooking the fact that Mr. Warrenne had never been to India.

"No; this was not the part that your father played in my earlier history," said Mrs. Digby, with a smile; "names in a narrative of this kind are but of secondary importance; yet when in your own concessions you touched slightly upon the manner in which Miss Reynolds had trifled with your feelings and misinterpreted your heart, I felt that it was not given to the daughter, any more than to the father, to comprehend the sacredness and the wealth of a true and deep affection."

Leonard looked all astonishment—although there was no reason why Mr. Reynolds should not have been the person referred to—and Miss Reynolds a worthy imitator of her father.

"It is natural, I suppose, for young people to form their opinion of the world at large from the little section that falls immediately under their eye," continued Mrs. Digby. "To me this incident embittered my feelings, and perverted my judgment. If he, whom I had invested with every perfection, whom I had enthroned above the angels, and worshipped as no mortal should be adored; if he could, for the loss of a little coin, perjure his inmost soul and break his unspoken vows, what must be the ordinary conduct of common men? What baseness, what pitiful treachery must direct their daily thoughts and acts! I shut myself up from every human being in silent disgust. I could hardly endure the needful presence of my servants. I transacted business by letter with the lawyer, who was on a visit at my house; and could only feel satisfaction at my wealth, inasmuch as it enabled me to carry out my plan of seclusion."

As Mrs. Digby spoke, for the first time during her history, with some warmth and animation, the kindling of her cheek and eye gave her back for the moment the bright and spiritual beauty of her youth.

"I had been acquainted with Mr. Warrenne during the lifetime of my father," continued Mrs. Digby; "and though my mind was too much pre-occupied to speculate on the object of his frequent visits, I had sometimes imagined that I was not indifferent to him. It was, I think, about six months after my father's death that I received a letter from him, in which he declared to me his long and devoted attachment, and offered to me with much respect and hesitation his hand. He had been withheld from making such a declaration for a length of time, under the idea that I was engaged. The departure of Mr. Reynolds had undeceived him in this respect. It did not occur to him that I could be forsaken; and he had eagerly awaited the close of the earliest interval that could elapse after my father's death, to lay before me his sentiments and solicit their return. He knew that if I married I should be penniless; and with a proud humility that pleased me, he touched on his ancient birth, his want of social position, his limited income, and the wealth he urged me to resign. He thought that to most women the affections of home were worth any sacrifice, and he knew that in my case I must purchase them by the surrender of my estate. In fact, he judged my heart as I had once hoped another would have judged and valued it. I am a bigot in behalf of the old blood, Mr. Leonard. I believe good sort of people may be found in every grade of life. I am not guilty of the impiety of supposing that Heaven is solely peopled with the descendants of the Normans and the Viking; but there is a high strain of feeling which alone belongs to such lordly descent. Every word of your father's letter breathed this strain."

Leonard coloured high with pleasure and emotion at this tribute to his father. Mrs. Digby went on:

"It may have occurred to you to meet with some trait of character, or perhaps only some written sentiment, which so wonderfully applied to the mood of your mind as to exercise a permanent and beneficent influence over your disposition. Such influence your father's letter had upon my feelings. I was at once lifted out of the deep despair which had followed my disappointment. The darkness around me seemed dispelled. There was yet faith, and love, and true nobility upon the earth. People may talk of the benefactors of their race; but those are the real benefactors who minister health and stability to a single human heart. It mattered nothing that I was unable to return his attachment. It mattered little that my peace and gladness of mind were inevitably destroyed. My trust in my fellow-creatures was gently restored; and I was visited by repose as soon as my natural grief was dispelled by time.

"It is singular," pursued Mrs. Digby, "that my father who left me

his estate upon such strict conditions, left me totally unfettered in my future disposal of it. Having no near relations, my thoughts often reverted to Mr. Warrenne as the worthiest person of my acquaintance, to make my heir. But he was some years older than myself, and the chances were that I might be the survivor. And as time slips away, I might have died intestate, if circumstances had not thrown you in my way, and decided my choice at once."

Leonard's astonishment almost took from him the power of utterance; he faltered something about his entire unworthiness to be so distinguished.

"With regard to our meeting on that terrible day," said Mrs. Digby, "although I should have ever felt grateful to you for your kindness, it would not alone have decided me on the step I am now taking; but you see that my principal reasons refer to affairs which took place before your birth and for which you are no way answerable; and let me tell you it is for my own contentment that I appoint an heir who has been brought up to my liking and who does no discredit to his bringing up.

"And now," she added, interrupting his deep-felt expressions of gratitude, "I must have my own way in certain particulars. It does not please me that my heir should derive his only advantages from my death; nor that he should step from a limited sphere of employment to the management of a large estate. I wish, therefore, that Mr. Warrenne should withdraw you from your present occupation, and send you to travel for two or three years. I should be glad that you spent some time in Italy and improve your taste in poetry and art. I have a horror of country squires! And now, Mr. Leonard, as I am not quite strong yet, I shall turn you out for to-day."

Leonard rode home bewildered by the change in his prospects, nor could he really believe his good fortune, until his father came from Mrs. Digby's deeply penetrated with her generosity; and informed him that she had taken legal measures to secure him her property, and had insisted on making him an allowance during her life, which would enable him with ease to carry out his plans of travelling when and where he pleased. She wished that her intentions with respect to Leonard should not be mentioned beyond his own family, not caring to have her affairs canvassed all over the county sooner than could be helped, and she suggested that Leonard should make his health the plea for withdrawing from Mr. Thomason's, and going to the South of Europe.

Of course, the consequence was that his daily visits to Forrel Court were set down to a sudden fancy on the part of Mrs. Digby to bestow her hand upon Leonard. The young man was pronounced a knave and a hypocrite, and the lady a very improper sort of woman.

(To be continued.)

"KENSINGTON MINOR."

BY GILBERT H. PAGE.

THERE are a great many Kensingtons in London, and North Kensington might as reasonably be named North Trincomalee for any connection it has with either locality; but Kensington Minor lies still further afield, and is to be found wherever the Briton's happy countrymen—and countrywomen—mostly congregate.

No need to tell you in which particular land lies the Kensington Minor of the following sketch. All such places are precisely the same. There is nothing foreign or individual about any one of them. And but that we sojourn for the time in flats instead of houses, consume our fuel in stoves instead of open grates, and pay for our letters twopence halfpenny apiece, we might to all other intents and purposes have remained at home. For here we find the same society animated by the same ideals. The same Japanese fans and bits of drapery spot the walls, the same eternal photograph frames strew the side-tables, the same heterogeneous collection of worthless china encumbers the same brackets and shelves. Here, the same afternoon tea is poured out at the same hour, accompanied by the same floods of small talk.

"Doesn't the place remind you of my little drawing-room in Ledbury Road?" cried Mrs. Romer exultant, when I recently called upon her. Mrs. Romer, by the way, comes from Bayswater and brings a distinctly Bayswater atmosphere with her. On the last available inch of wall she has just nailed an orange-coloured palm-leaf, had planted in it an artificial strawberry plant with Brobdingnagian fruit, and hung from the handle thereof streamers of pink and green ribbon. (Kensington errs more æsthetically.) I agreed it did look remarkably like Ledbury Road, and reflected what an immense advantage it was that, though we had travelled hundreds of miles into foreign lands, nevertheless Kensington and Bayswater remained always with us.

Mrs. Romer has pitched her tent in Kensington Minor because the living is cheap. Milk only three halfpence a quart, she tells me; while a carriage with two horses may be had to any part of the town for the equivalent of sixpence. But she evinces an immense contempt for the dunderheaded individuals who ask her so little, and while she preys upon the land to her heart's desire, she satisfies her conscience by abuse of its Inhabitants.

"Beggarly" is Mrs. Romer's favourite expression, which she applies to every one outside the pale of Kensington Minor. The Duke, the Duchess, the Court, the Army; the people who put an

aristocratic prefix to their names and the people who don't; all are, in Mrs. Romer's opinion, a "beggarly set," their views "stupid!" and their pretensions and possessions "such rubbish!"

I ventured once to point out to Mrs. Romer, that if she didn't intrench herself quite so obstinately within the ramparts of Kensington Minor, if she mingled a little more with the outer Inhabitants, she might find occasion to modify her opinion. Among a population of over a hundred thousand it seemed difficult to believe that not one just man was to be found.

"Ignorance of a thing, or of a person," said I—and I was conscious, as I said it, there was more than a touch of "Old Morality" about the phrase—"will often lead us to dislike that which with a better knowledge we should find most congenial to us."

But Mrs. Romer frankly confessed she would sooner remain ignorant than run the risk of getting to like the horrid Inhabitants. She began to complain of their want of manners, and mentioned an incident where the national custom differs slightly from our own.

"Oh!" said I soothingly, "little outward forms of that sort vary with every country you go to. Fundamental good breeding, which means consideration for the feelings of others, is everywhere the same. In essentials, you wouldn't find the Inhabitants one whit inferior to ourselves. Indeed, I fancy we shock their sense of propriety quite as often as they shock ours. For instance, here it is an invariable custom to——"

But Mrs. Romer wasn't paying me the smallest attention. She had heard the door bell ring; it was her Tuesday "at home," and she was busy lighting up the spirit-lamp to boil the tea-kettle.

Of course every one in Kensington Minor has a day. So sacred an institution of the mother country could not be lightly discarded by her children. Mrs. Romer's little sitting-room began to fill. Mothers with their daughters, aunts with their nieces, unattached ladies no longer so very young extending over each other the wing of chaperonage; and what is not, thank Heaven, so usual at home, a posse of beardless youths—the crammer's men—who swarm in Kensington Minor. It is to be supposed that these young gentlemen condescend to do a little study of a morning; since every afternoon of the week they are to be found at the various "at homes" handing tea-cups, exchanging snobberies, and indulging in all that is most flat, stale, and unprofitable by way of conversation. For which inestimable benefits the British parent cheerfully pays a couple of hundred a year to some British bear-leader or coach.

I move my elbow slightly, and down rattle a dozen china poodles from the *étagère* behind me. The word I let out is fortunately covered by the entrance of two additional visitors. (Now I can tell you a story about these two ladies which is typical of Kensington Minor.) Mrs. Romer swims forward to greet them. "How d'ye do, my dear Mrs. Harting! So pleased to see you! Georgie, you are looking

blooming! Here is a place for you, but I don't think I need introduce you to Mr. Stanley?"

At which there are blushes, laughter, general hilarity; for wherever this young lady is expected, Mr. Stanley is sure to be found, and his wealth, his intentions, and poor Mrs. Harting's fond hopes, are constant themes for discourse.

I should be perhaps ashamed to record such gossip; but that the mind is subdued to what it works in. Here, there is no escape from one's environment, as in the larger Kensington at home. Here one is compelled to drink his allotted portion of futility daily; and one even finds a sad interest in recording the exact degree of mental deterioration that supervenes.

Therefore I will not apologise further for reporting what I hear. It is said that Mrs. Harting prays ardently that Georgie may find a husband, and may find him soon, for the yoke she lays on her mother's neck is no light one. Miss Harting is certainly very pretty; she is said to be very perverse and very extravagant too. There is no end to the number of her admirers or of her frocks, but as yet no one of the former has stepped forward to take upon his manly shoulders the payment of the latter.

But although Mrs. Harting is a pious woman, she is likewise a practical one. She believes in Providence, and she also believes in the wisdom of nations—proverbs. "Heaven helps her who helps herself" is often on her lips, and she leaves no stone unturned to secure unto herself a son-in-law.

It was Mrs. Romer's account of young Stanley which induced her to remove her migratory Lares and Penates from a neighbouring principality, and set them up in Kensington Minor. She and her daughter arrived at the railway-station, one spring day, with hope in their hearts and trunks full of dresses. Mrs. Romer met them. "My dear," she began, when she had an opportunity of speaking to Mrs. Harting aside, "he is such a charming young man! such nice manners! so well connected! speaks of his uncle General Stanley and of his aunt Lady Mary Muggins——"

"But are you sure he is well off?" asked Mrs. Harting dubiously. So many matrimonial swans having turned out, on nearer inspection, such very poor ganders indeed.

Mrs. Romer was positive. "Every one says so. He has the best rooms in the best hotel, rides or drives daily, wears a fur coat I positively covet, and shows in every way money is no object to him. But, my dear creature, quick! quick! there he goes now—there! there! on the other side of the street!"

Mrs. Romer was looking out of the window of the Hôtel d'Angleterre. Mrs. Harting rushed to join her. She was just in time to catch sight of two figures vanishing round the corner—a tall elegant young man walking arm-in-arm with a shorter, shabbier individual who leaned upon a stick.

"Dear young man!" cried Mrs. Romer, kissing her hand to the retreating backs, "I quite love you myself! Isn't he handsome? The other is his paid companion, secretary, or whatever he calls himself, Captain Grant."

"He is certainly good-looking," said Mrs. Harting. "I hope Georgie may think so; but she invariably takes up with the wrong man. It would draw tears of blood from a stone to see the way she goes on with detrimentals, while letting the best 'parties' slip through her fingers."

I may as well here explain how it is that I am able to describe scenes at which I was not present. It is not due to the licence of the story-teller. It is an actual fact that in Kensington Minor everything done or said becomes public property within four-and-twenty hours afterwards.

But I *was* present at the especially-arranged afternoon when young Stanley first made Miss Harting's acquaintance. He left no doubt on any of us of the impression she had produced. He never addressed a word to any one else. The other ladies were obliged to entertain themselves with me and with Stanley's paid companion, Captain Grant.

This gentleman was not particularly entertaining. Mrs. Romer tells me that people in these subordinate positions never are. But, as was remarked afterwards, he exhibited an affectionate respect for his young employer, which on the one hand compensated in some measure for his own deficiencies, and on the other was the best possible proof of Stanley's real worth. A man who is well spoken of by his valet is necessarily a man of merit.

"Such a charming young man!" cried the elder ladies in chorus, when he had gone. "So unassuming!" "Has so much to say for himself!" "Is so very good-looking!"

"He certainly wears the most magnificent diamond ring I ever saw!" cried Miss Georgie, with animation. At which Mrs. Harting smiled. She knew her child had all the admiration of the Red Indian squaw for bits of glittering glass. Stanley's fine diamond was a trump card on, or in, his hand.

It was not long before he and his diamond paid the Hartings a visit. He was accompanied by Captain Grant, whose presence proved rather a damper to the gaiety of the proceedings. For the Captain was a silent man, embarrassed, and awkward in demeanour, so that the first thing he did was to upset a tea-cup into his hat. Young Stanley was alert in coming to his aid, and while restoring things to order rattled on in so brilliant a fashion, that Mrs. Harting was in ecstasies over his gentle breeding and his gentle heart.

"And do you observe, Georgie," she asked that young lady, when their visitors had departed, "how Mr. Stanley appeals to Captain Grant on all occasions? This shows real delicacy of mind, and must greatly alleviate the disagreeables of the poor man's dependent

position. I wonder, by the way, what Mr. Stanley keeps him for? He can't be a very pleasant companion."

"I think he is much pleasanter than Mr. Stanley himself!" was the unexpected reply, which was just one of those speeches calculated to draw tears from stony places, and Mrs. Harting, being anything but stony, dissolved into quite a summer shower.

Kensington Minor noticed her red eyes, and spread the report that Miss Georgie had again been "throwing plates." Kensington Minor noticed also that Mr. Stanley kept the young lady constantly supplied with magnificent bouquets, that every afternoon he had some scheme for her amusement, and that at all our festive gatherings—we were constantly giving dances in Kensington Minor—he took care to secure for himself a lion's share of her waltzes.

Captain Grant used to come to these evenings too, and stand leaning against the wall looking on in silence. It was on one such occasion I heard young Stanley half apologise for his friend's presence.

"I dare say you think it odd, Miss Harting, that a man of his age should care to come out to dances, particularly as he is lame and can't dance himself. But I suppose it's dull for him when I'm out."

"I know it can never be dull for him when you are in!" said the little wretch with ready flattery. "Is he an old friend of yours?"

"Yes—er—that is to say, of my mater's."

"Your mother must be very glad to know you are with so steady and good a friend!"

"Oh, I like it myself!" answered the young man; "travelling is much better fun, too, than going about all by oneself."

"It is a great advantage for Captain Grant, of course?" She raised her eyebrows and voice interrogatively.

"The advantages are mutual!" replied the young man, with an amount of modesty that roused suspicion. "Grant is a thoroughly good fellow, and if he sometimes bores me with his strait-laced ways I'm sure I plague him much oftener with my wild ones. But I can make allowances, I hope!"

He certainly could make allowances. When, later in the evening, Captain Grant remarked in peremptory fashion he was going, and should be glad if Stanley would accompany him, the young man agreed with the utmost readiness.

Mrs. Romer was indignant, Mrs. Harting vexed, but Mr. Stanley with a smile and a shrug of the shoulders—a whisper to the one that poor Grant could not get along well without his arm, to the other that now all Miss Georgie's dances were gone, he no longer cared to stay, a murmured wonder to the young lady herself as to how he should live through the hours until he saw her again—departed, leaving behind him the (almost) unanimous opinion that his manners were as faultless as his heart.

In spite of the doubts he had expressed on the subject, young

Stanley fortunately did live through the night, and was thus enabled to renew his attentions on the next and on many succeeding days.

The future glowed with roseate hues for Miss Harting's mother, and all Miss Harting's friends congratulated her to her face and traduced her behind her back. Miss Harting herself, to keep up her character for perversity, occasionally snubbed her young, rich, and handsome swain, to act at, smile at, chatter at, his second-rate travelling companion.

The elder ladies were terrified by such imprudence, and Mrs. Romer volunteered to convey a hint to Mr. Stanley, that, in general, Captain Grant's absence would be preferable to his company.

The young man's tact, Mrs. Romer told me, was admirable. He said nothing at the time, but that her insinuations had borne fruit was soon evident. At an early date he casually let the ladies know that Grant was away on business, and then, as a happy thought, begged them to come the next day to a little dinner at his hotel. Would they honour him so far, he pleaded, adding it would be a real kindness to rescue him from the tedium of a long evening spent alone.

Mrs. Romer was enraptured, Miss Georgie not unwilling, and Mrs. Romer anticipated something quite out of the common in the way of a *menu*. "That dear young man had such exquisite taste." They dressed for the fray with more than ordinary care, and arrived at the hotel a few minutes before the hour.

My knowledge of what followed I owe to a very good friend of mine, who, however, filling for the moment the position of waiter at the Hôtel d'Angleterre, is not recognised in Kensington Minor.

All day long the rain had fallen heavily. The ladies told each other that the "dear young man" could not even have solaced himself with a walk. They glowed with satisfaction at the pleasure they were about to confer. But when they reached his *appartement* and were shown into a drawing-room redolent with flowers, they were a little surprised that their host was not there to receive them. And their surprise was increased when, through the curtains that shut off an inner room, they recognised his light tenor voice raised somewhat sharply as if in altercation. He spoke, and a deep bass growl replied. Its tones, too, were quite familiar to the listeners.

"What a shabby trick!" "So he never went, after all!" "Why, it's Captain Grant!" murmured the three ladies in a breath.

"Treated you badly, my dear fellow?" rolled out the bass voice behind the curtain; "I think I have allowed you considerable latitude. Some people would say you were treating me badly."

These strange words electrified the listening ladies. Being but frail daughters of Eve, they moved forward simultaneously, and, carefully holding their breath and their gowns, stretched three rose-coloured ears towards the dividing curtains.

The excited young Tenor began again. "Well, they are my friends, and they come to see me, and I think it deuced hard you should grudge me their society."

"It's a deuced deal harder you should grudge me my dinner, considering what it will cost me," replied the Bass.

"Go on!" cried the Tenor, vibrating with temper; "go on! You never let me forget my position, do you? You even count the cost of what I eat and drink. You take a mean advantage of my situation!"

"It is you," said the Bass, "who take a mean advantage of my good-nature, and my affection for your mother."

"My mother would be gratified, certainly, if she could see the way you treat me!"—this with lofty scorn.

"How do I treat you?"

"Abominably!"

"How abominably?"

The ladies behind the curtain strained their ears in agonised expectancy, but no answer came. One of the men now rose—Grant evidently, for when the bass voice spoke again it sounded much nearer at hand.

"I treat you abominably because I refuse to turn out of my own rooms on a wet night like this. The fact is, I have spoilt you. It's just my confounded laziness and love of a quiet life. But you are carrying things too far. 'Pon my word, I should not be surprised if the people here mistook me for your secretary instead of you for mine! Certainly, secretarial duties sit lightly on your shoulders! You are never to be found when wanted, nor can I depend on you for a single thing. This last fortnight I have had to write all my notes myself, and even so have been reduced to buying paper from the waiter, thanks to the liberality with which you help yourself to mine. Yesterday I received a bill for ten pounds from the florist, though personally I have not had ten shillings' worth of flowers since we came. But I have been presented also with a bill from your tailor, and here I kick. Over and above your salary—which I consider a liberal one—I will not pay for your coats. My friendship for your mother alone would forbid me to encourage you in such extravagant ways."

"You have said enough," cried the Tenor passionately; "I know you are my master and I your paid man, but you need not be for ever flinging it in my teeth."

There was a deep bass laugh. "Humbug! master and man forsooth! You, who help yourself to my things as if they were your own, and are positively wearing my very ring on your finger at this present moment."

"Do you think I want your beastly ring?" cried the Tenor, with a suspicious catch in it; then a window was thrown violently back, and the ring apparently flung out, for the bass voice laughed again.

"You are the most passionate fellow in the world, Stanley, and have evidently no idea of the value of diamonds. But I will return you good for evil, and as you are not at all fit to receive your friends just at present, I will go and receive them for you."

However, the listening ladies did not wait for this; gathering up

their skirts, they fled precipitately into the arms of my friend, the waiter, who, with professional gravity, escorted them out.

"To think how that miserable young man has imposed upon us!" cried the indignant Mrs. Romer.

"The ways of Providence are indeed inscrutable!" sighed Mrs. Harting.

"Well, I always told you Captain Grant was the better of the two," said Miss Georgie, her wandering preference suddenly fixed by the recent disclosures. Crossing the courtyard, she looked for and found the diamond sparkling among the rain-drops. She picked it up, and returned it that evening to the rightful owner, with, we may presume, a pretty little note.

The result of which note was of course a visit from Captain Grant next day. And what was the result of that visit? Well, for one thing, Mr. Stanley returned to his mother and penury in the wilds of Bayswater. So much is certain. And if I desired to flatter my lady readers, I should round the following sentences in good old style: "And the Captain secured a companion, amanuensis, and wife all in one, who did a great deal more for love than her talented young predecessor had ever done from a sense of duty; while Mrs. Harting found in the granting of her prayers (here I should score a bad pun) more than all the most exacting mother could desire."

But long sojourn in Kensington Minor has not as yet entirely sapped my reverence for truth. I happened to be at the railway station when Captain Grant was leaving for—Trincomalee, shall we say? He had kept his intentions secret, and I only learned his departure and his destination at that moment from himself.

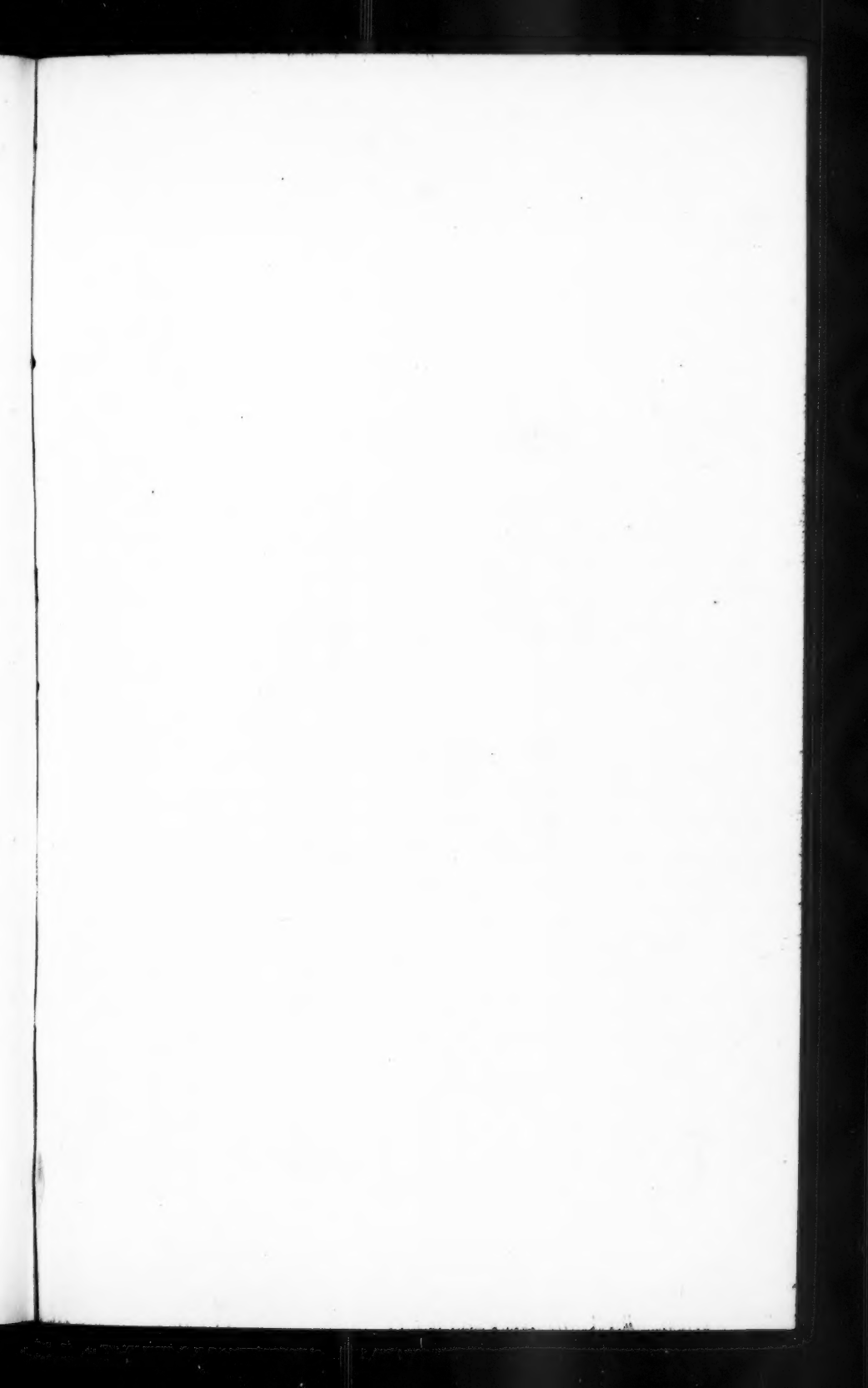
"I think," said he, in explanation, "a longer residence in Kensington Minor would be dangerous."

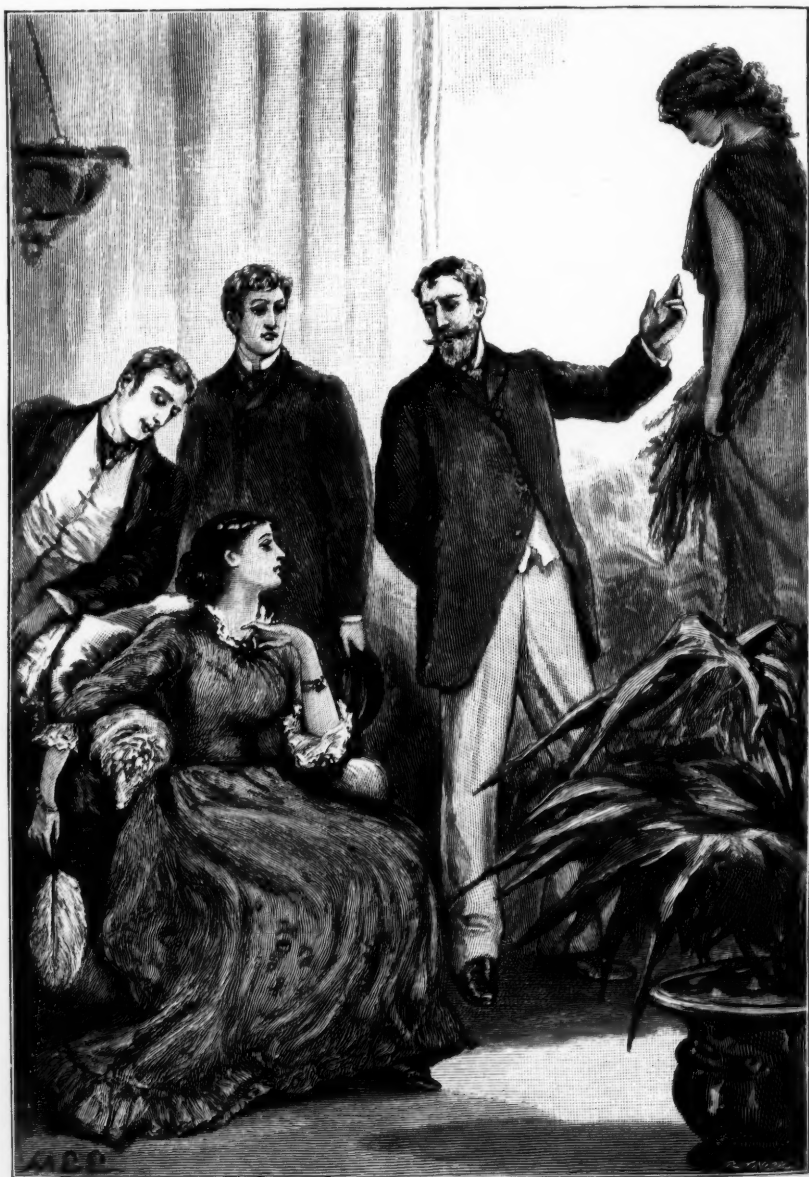
"Ah!" I answered warmly, for my mind was full of a case of typhoid I had just heard of in the west quarter; "you are quite right. The sanitary arrangements are a disgrace to civilisation. The English here should make up their minds as to what is wanted, and combine together to obtain it." Again the copy-book platitudes of "Old Morality" flashed across my mind. "Union is strength," I remarked sententially.

Grant looked at me without speaking, but his slow smile broadening along his face set creases in his cheeks, and twinkled in the wrinkles about his eyes. It seemed to me to convey a vast variety of meanings not expressed in the simple phrases he presently uttered.

"It's not the sanitary so much as the social arrangements which I find dangerous," said he; "and though union is occasionally strength, I am afraid it is more frequently discord. Ah! we are off! Good-bye."







"WHY, IT IS YOURSELF!" EXCLAIMED SIR FREDERIC.



NOTICE.

In response to numerous suggestions, the next or JUNE Number of **THE ARGOSY** will be the **Extra Summer Number** of the Magazine: thus combining the two numbers in one, in place of making the Summer Number a separate publication: just as the December Number has always been the Extra Christmas Number of the ARGOSY.

This arrangement will also do away with what has been a source of difficulty and complaint: the fact that the Summer Number could not be bound up with the ordinary half-yearly volume.

The JUNE or SUMMER NUMBER will be of the same length as the December or Christmas Number, and the same price: **ONE SHILLING.**

The July Number will be of the usual length and price: **SIXPENCE.**

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